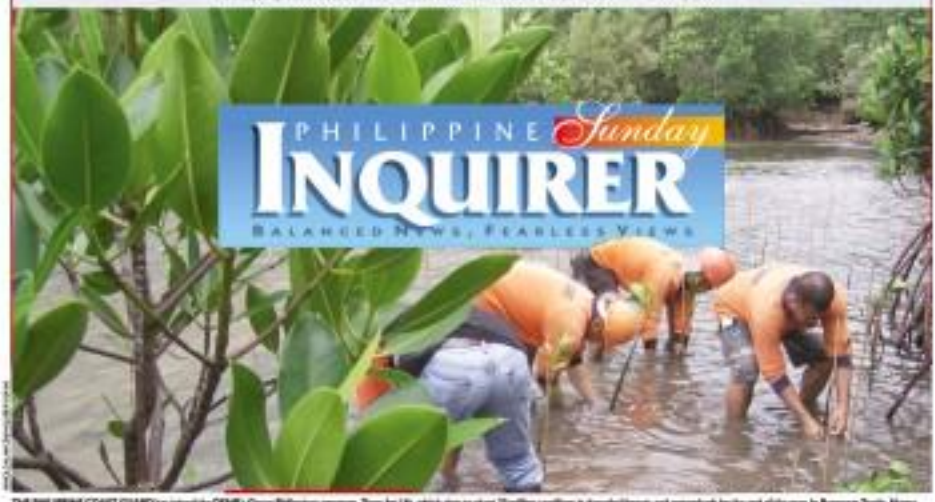
Sunday, September 23, 2007 ... Philippine Sunday Inquirer ... Balanced News, Fearless Views



THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD has joined the DENR's Green Philippines program, Trees for Life, which aims to plant 20 million seedlings in denuded forests and watersheds by the end of the year. In Barangay Tanza, Hanna Valencia, Gabriela, the Coast Guard's role planting mangrove trees to revive the coastal ecosystem that was devastated by the oil spill that hit Guimaras, with Mauro Valencia one of the most heavily affected, in August 2006.

GMA suspends NBN deal

₱26.4-B cyber education project also shelved indefinitely

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE CONTROVERSIAL NATIONAL BROADBAND NETwork (NBN) project that was awarded to China's ZTE Corp. has been ordered suspended by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

While the government signatory to the project was Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza, it was Trade Secretary Peter Favila—who had earlier said he had nothing to do with the deal—who made the "major announcement" before noon yesterday.

Four days earlier, Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, a son of the Speaker, had told a Senate inquiry that the President's husband had tried to bully him into backing off from the $329 million project.

"I just would like to share with you that ... much-talked-about and much-maligned broadband project, upon the instruction of the President, has been suspended," Favila said the small group of reporters who made it to the heavily cordoned press conference in the lobby of the Edsa Shangri-La hotel in Mandaluyong City.

He was accompanied by Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera, the acting justice secretary.

Asked how long the suspension would last, he said: "Indefinitely."

Favila said the President had also or-

(FOR SUSPENSION) A12

Joe on Joey: 'An agent of the Lord'

By Norman Bordadora

DATELINE MAY BOOM #1 JOEY "Joey" De Venecia III as the erstwhile addict who threw a monkey wrench into Chinese plan to help the Philippines put up a National Broadband Network (NBN).

But to his father, Speaker Jose De Venecia, Joey is an "agent of the Lord," following President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision yesterday to suspend indefinitely the $329-million NBN network deal.

(ON JOEY) 4A

Senators to continue probe; graft issues remain

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SENATORS VICTORIAS LIBRE NOTICE that they would continue the inquiry into the $329 million National Broadband Network (NBN) project that has suspended President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos and Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza in an alleged corruption scandal.

The senators found suspicious Mukherjee's suspension of the deal with China's ZTE Corp., and hinted that the President should altogether cancel the contract signed by Mendoza in April on behalf of the Philippine government.

"For all intents and purposes, the ZTE contract is suspended because the Supreme Court has issued a restraining order to the implementation of the contract. The decision, therefore, should be to rescind the contract and not to merely suspend it," said Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan.

He criticized Malacañang for not addressing the lack of transparency in the transaction and the alleged kickbacks involved.

"Will this (suspension) mean that those who surrendered transparency and those who did not follow the standard procedures in this transaction will be reprimanded? Or will this

SENATORS A4

Soldiers turn air base into veggie farm

By Tara Quintanilla

LIPA, BATANGAS—SERMON TELLING the land, sowing seeds and watering crops are slowly becoming part of the rigid military routine at a Philippine air force base here.

Boxes of sweet papaya, corn, bell pepper and tomato thrive under the bright sun and in the pure clean air of the 372-hectare Fernando Air Base, a sprawling military base where abundant idle land is slowly being turned into a vegetable garden.

The project is part of an organization-wide progressive-science idle-military-land into-productive-use encouraged by the Commander in Chief, President Macapagal-Arroyo.

BASEBALL A6

HOT PROJECT: The Red Express Caravan of Habitat for Humanity Philippines arrives at the Aurora resort (home) in Daraga, Albay with 400 volunteers wearing yellow hard hats ready to build 3,000 houses worth ₱15,000 each for victims of typhoon "Reming" (last year who are still living in tents and shacks. Beneficiaries are only required to put in 500 hours of "sweat equity." Former Miss Universe Margie Moran, Habitat Philippines center, is one of the caravan pioneers. (Story on Page A4.)

School rises from the ashes of Pinatubo

By Fernando del Mundo

DELIA MACAPAC KNEW HOW HARD a lot to do when she returned to her alma mater in 2002 to become its principal.

Pampanga High School (PHS) was then half-buried in lahar, swept there over the years during the rainy season from higher grounds covered with ash, mud and other pyroclastic materials ejected by Mount Pinatubo during its catastrophic eruption in 1991.

Most of the 37 buildings and thatched huts where over 9,000 students held classes in 166 rooms were severely damaged and filthy.

There were only two toilets—unserviceable most of the time—on the campus sprawled over six hectares in downtown San Fernando, the Pampanga provincial capital. Students defecated everywhere, breeding swarms of flies and mosquitoes.

When the rains came, the school was waist-deep in water. The floods re-

BANGKA A13

Tender loving hospice care in the comfort of home

By Nale Carreras

HERMAN BEGINS THAT ARE WORTH dying for should also include the "rights of the dying" to spend their last days in comfort and minimal pain.

This is the motivation that drives hospice care volunteers Arsenio Kilalo, a lawyer, and Elsa Allado, a doctor, to set aside their Sunday mornings to visit the homes of the terminally ill in depressed areas south of Manila.

They take foods and gather donations to provide patients with free medicines, lend them wheelchairs, oxygen tanks and nebulizers, and arrange ambulance services, among other things. They also provide psychological and family counseling, as well as prayers.

They are stepping up their campaign this week as the Philippines plays host on the 9th Asia Pacific Hospice Conference at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Hotel from Sept. 27 to 30.

Early this month, for instance, the hospice volunteers paid a visit to "Lyn," 45, a single mother of two, to check on her supply of medication for her swelling headaches.

"They are like angels," Lyn, who

FINDER A6

JOB Your ride to success right here

TOOTING HIS OWN HORN: Police officer, a PhilAger cum laude grad who solved 2 kidnap cases, plays '50s-'60s classics — SUNDAY MAGAZINE

AT HOME: Top creative minds of interior/fashion designers want to get inside your house — LIFESTYLE / F4

LESS THAN GENTLE JOURNEYS: 4 decades after her onscreen debut, eternal rebel Gina Pareño finally finds redemption, recognition — ENTERTAINMENT / G4

LOVE in a time of martial law

GLOBAL PINOY / A19

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

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6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN

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GMA for absolute pardon for Erap

Vidal, Pardo said to be negotiating with Palace for convicted leader

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **CHILDREN INT'L,** Habitat build houses for Bicol typhoon victims /A8
- **POLICE TO LIST** barangay polls 'hot spots' /A7
- **SENATORS VOW** smooth sailing for cheap meds bill /A5

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS WILLING to grant an "absolute pardon" to convicted plunderer, deposed President Joseph Estrada, Malacañang said yesterday.

"Absolute means unconditional," said Sergio Apostol, the presidential legal adviser. Appelling speculation that there would be strings attached to the presidential pardon for Estrada, the first Philippine president to be convicted under the anti-Plunder Law.

The Sandiganbayan anti-graft court on Sept. 12 found Estrada guilty of plunder for collecting hundreds of millions of pesos from illegal gambling and illegal logging.

Estrada was sentenced to life in prison but Apostol said the disgraced leader, who turned 70 in April, was now eligible for a pardon.

"We will not impose conditions," Apostol said, continuing that the issue could be resolved before Christmas and that the talks would be concluded soon.

Just the day before, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and other administration officials said that discussions on the grant of either a pardon or amnesty to Estrada were already in an "advanced stage" and that Estrada might be freed from his "rest house arrest" by Christmas without having served his sentence at all.

Explaining the absolute and unconditional pardon over executions, Apostol said no conditions whatsoever would be imposed on the convict being pardoned.

Apostol, who was a prosecutor in Estrada's aborted impeachment trial in the Senate in 2001, explained there is a traditional pardon would mean that Estrada would be granted parole. But it is a pleasure is temporarily released before the completion of a sentence on the promise of good behavior.

But he said President Arroyo had the authority to grant an absolute pardon.

Apostol said he did not know why Estrada was issuing mixed signals about a possible pardon.

The convicted former President had denied being in negotiations with the administration for the pardon, but if he were to accept the offer of a pardon, it must be in "unconditional" one which should definitely not include an admission of guilt, he had said.

However, Spokesman Jose de Venecia said the other day that his father-in-law Mike, the House ambidextrous, was negotiating for the disgraced leader. He said Estrada's former trade secretary, Jose Pardo, was the agent of the talks.

Pano told reporters Friday that he met the "Pardo-Vidal arrangement" and that Estrada has said he would accept a pardon.

Apostol urged Estrada to forego appealing the Sandiganbayan guilty verdict against him so that government "can act in earnest" the process of proclaiming him.

Estrada will only prolong the process if his lawyers seek judicial relief in both the Sandiganbayan and the Supreme Court, he said.

Blessing Estrada's appeal to the high court could take years to resolve, he said.

"So our appeal for him is to withdraw all his motions and allow the court's decision to become final and executory, then he will appeal directly with the President. Then our President can start the process ... for him to avail of a pardon, but that remains in the hands of Erap if he agrees. If not, nothing will happen," Apostol said.

Vidal Ampatuan also ruled out the idea of an amnesty for Estrada, saying that only political offenders were covered by an amnesty. Plunder is a criminal offense.

"We will have problems if he opts to avail of amnesty because amnesty is for political offenders only and not for plunderers," said Apostol.

He explained that the amnesty proclamation is voted recently by Mr. Arroyo covered only amnesty "groups and those who committed political offenses."

He said Estrada could claim that "I'm a communist," or he would be covered by the amnesty.

Doctors urge higher health care budget, since economy's up

By Beverly T. Hamsilan

DESPITE RECENT ECONOMIC gains, the government's budget for health care is still far from the international standards set by the World Health Organization (WHO), according to a nongovernment organization of doctors.

The Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD) has urged the government to prioritize health care for the poor by increasing the Department of Health's budget amid the backdrop of an improving economy.

In a statement yesterday, HEAD deputy secretary general Dr. Carmen Rivera said that while the proposed P23.7-billion 2008 budget for 2008 was higher than its 2007 budget, it was still only 1.3 percent of the proposed P1.23-trillion national budget for next year.

The DOH budget in 2007 was 1.1 percent of the national budget, and 1.0 percent in 2006.

Rivera said HEAD was calling for a health budget close to the WHO recommended 5 percent of gross national product (GNP), particularly since the administration has been using the economy as an ilet-pointing.

"If the economy is really improving, then there is no excuse not to go in this direction," Rivera said.

She said that, at the very least, the DOH budget should be around P50 billion to allow it to subsidize its hospitals, implement a comprehensive public health program and provide benefits to public health workers and professionals.

Rivera said the country's economic gains should first be reflected in public health care instead of, say, guns and bullets.

The group said the 2008 budget only netted seventh among the budgets for government agencies. The Department of National Defense would get about four percent of the budget pie while the Department of Transportation and Communications would get about two percent.

Nat'l police makeover starts with stations

By Nicole Puyo

IT'S GOODBYE TO BOXY AND drab police stations.

In a bid to win back the public's trust and confidence in the police, the leadership of the Philippine National Police has started a project to uplift law enforcement capabilities around the country beginning with the improved physical appearance of police stations.

Deputy Director General Jesus Verzosa, chief for operations, said a clean and spruced up police station made operators more creative in the community.

"I told Agbayani and them police stations give the public an impression that a good law-abiding and enforcing public service," Verzosa told the Inquirer.

He said the PNP's Program Management Office (PMO), which he heads as the overall in charge of the projects, had identified three vital aspects in improving law enforcement services. These are facilities investment, systems and procedures, and human resources.

Besides refurbishing or repainting police stations, Verzosa said the project, dubbed "Model Police Stations," would upgrade communication equipment and other tools for fighting crime.

The project will also involve training the policemen at these stations to be more responsive and efficient in their duties.

Already, the project has gained the support of foreign donor countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as local government and nongovernmental units.

"Eventually, we would want to elicit more support from the communities themselves. By getting more involved in the communities, we will know their needs and problems relative to crime fighting," Verzosa said.

Stench aborts Atienza tour of dirty Bulacan rivers

By Carmela Reyes
Inquirer Central Luzon

MARILAO, BULACAN—DENR technical officers had promised the inclusion of two rivers in this town on an international list of the world's "dirty 10" or most polluted places, questioning the criteria used in the survey.

But when Environment Secretary Lito Atienza arrived for a boat tour of the Marilao-Meycauayan-Obando river system on Friday, the stench alone was enough to make him cancel the cruise at the last minute.

Atienza admitted that he cancelled the tour because he was stung by the nauseating odor and "turned off" by the sad state of the river.

He said he would closely coordinate with Bulacan mayors, local environment officials and environment groups to clean up the rivers, hopefully "in two years."

Atienza chose to view the controversial rivers' condition from a color discharge atop the Poblacion Bridge here, and discussed ways to rehabilitate the main waterway with Gov. Joselito Mendoza, Mayor Epifanio Guillermo and other local government officials.

The Marilao and Meycauayan rivers were included in the list of the world's worst polluted places for 2007 compiled by Blacksmith Institute, an independent environment group based in New York.

The institute's report warned that "all the areas in the 2007's 10 are very toxic and dangerous to human health." Recycling plants and tanneries reportedly threw their waste untreated into the river, endangering the lives of some 250,000 residents.

The institute's top list was based on scoring criteria devised by an international panel that included researchers from Johns Hopkins University, Harvard University and Mount Sinai Hospital. Specialists from Green Cross Switzerland also participated in the year's assessment of more than 400 polluted sites, a press release from the institute said.

Atienza appealed to the local officials to relocate the tanneries and factories along the rivers to Meycauayan City and Marilao town.

"This is what we did with Pasig River. We relocated the factories, favoring the river cannot be clean overnight," said Atienza, formerly the mayor of Manila.

He also urged local governments to stop issuing permits for new factories along the rivers and to strictly enforce measures on proper garbage disposal.

Local officials, however, pointed to Metro Manila towns and cities as another cause of their woes.

On Wednesday, Guillermo said the waste of 300,000 residents of Caloocan City were dumped in a relocation site in Bagong Silang and were swept by floodwaters into the waterways of Bulacan.

The Blacksmith report identified the pollutants in the Bulacan rivers as carcinogenic hexavalent chromium, heavy metals, pesticides, sewage, solid waste and lavatory waste.

Senators to continue probe; graft issues remain

From page A1

merely be a move to justify the noise of the controversy?" he said.

Pangilinan said the Senate would press on with its inquiry so that "only clods who either have abundance [controversies]" would be held accountable.

"Suspending the contract will not cure the problem around, nor prevent a repeat of this controversy. We will see this investigation through so that if any good should come out of this grave controversy, it is the lesson that we will not tolerate irregularities in public service," Pangilinan also said.

No effect on SC case

Howard Yue, ZTE global marketing director and chief information technology officer, said the fate of the NBN deal now rested with the Supreme Court.

"We all need to bring everything to the Supreme Court, and whatever else would happen now must be done by following the legal process," Yue said in a phone interview shortly after Trade Secretary Peter Favila announced the suspension of the deal.

The suspension would have no effect on the case seeking its nullification pending in the Supreme Court, its spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez said.

Early this month, the high court, acting on the petition of Iloilo Rep. Gen. Robert Nograles and Anakpawis Partylist Rep. Crispin Beltran, voted 8-7 to issue a temporary restraining order prohibiting government officials from enforcing the ZTE contract pending the resolution of the case raising the issue of graft.

"As long as the TRO is being respected, meaning that they do not proceed with any hasty and implement the contract, there won't be any problem," Marquez said.

ZTE had proposed a build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme for the NBN project. Its majority owner, Jose Sixto" de Venecia III, a son and namesake of the Speaker, accused Abalos of trying to bribe him with $130 million to pull out of the project, and Jose Miguel Arroyo, the President's husband, of telling him to "back off."

Abalos has denied the accusation and is set to testify in the Senate next week.

Graft issues still there

Sen. Manuel Roxas II, who had earlier insisted that the NBN project was "unnecessarily overpriced and overdesigned," again called on Malacañang to drop it.

"Why not cancel the contract altogether to defuse the charged political atmosphere and enable the government to start anew on solid and transparent footing?" he said, adding:

"I believe our historic ties and friendship with China are strong enough to overcome this."

Roxas cochairs the inquiry with Senator Alan Peter Cayetano and Rodolfo Biazon.

Sen. Francis Escudero said Mr. Arroyo had ordered the suspension "to gradually ease out the Senate inquiry mood."

"But I don't think the Senate will buy it. Why just suspend [the contract when] the Supreme Court TRO already did that? The order is superdense. She should already cancel it and start a review of all similar contracts entered into by government agencies," Escudero said.

Cayetano, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee, said the suspension of the deal had no effect on the inquiry because "graft and corruption issues are still relevant."

Said Nonoy: "The Palace decision will not impair or derail our hearings because these are held in aid of legislation so that such odious transactions will not happen again."

He said the government should submit the details of the contract for scrutiny. "We also need to hear the side of Chairman Abalos and other Cabinet officials. Our people deserve nothing less than a full explanation of all these matters," he added.

'Thank God'

Speaker De Venecia said he received news of the suspension of the deal from the President herself.

"I said, 'Thank God.' This is what I've been asking for for some time," he said, describing his reaction after he received a "message" at around 11 a.m. from Ms Arroyo that she was suspending the NBN deal and the Cyber Education Project.

"I called her up and I congratulated her," he added.

Ms Arroyo said the suspension was "an act of courage and a commonsensical decision" on the part of the President.

"I'm very happy. This will reboot the system in this country and the controversy," he said.

The Speaker said he hoped that the suspension of the NBN deal would result in its conversion into a BOT project.

"This is what I have been hoping for. That the contract be suspended and converted into a [BOT project]. There will be no foreign loans, there will be no government subsidy, there will be no sovereign risk" he said.

'Delaying tactic'

Sen. Ma. Ana Consuelo "Jinky" Madrigal said the President's suspension order betrayed "her desperate attempt to escape her cruelty."

"This is a delaying tactic to make the people forget the issue at hand so that she can concentrate on the deal at a later time," Madrigal said.

According to the senator, the only issue the President should now deal with is not involved in the scandal is to demand the resignation of Abalos, Mendoza and Assistant Transportation Secretary Lorenzo Formoso.

The Senate has so far held two hearings on the NBN project.

During the second hearing last Thursday that lasted more than six hours, Mendoza and Formoso failed to convince the senators of the top priority need of the government to set up its own NBN to be funded by a loan from China.

Mendoza insisted that Abalos had never talked to him about the NBN deal, and denied that Mike Arroyo had tried to intimidate Jury de Venecia into backing out of the project.

But at the end of the hearing, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said Abalos had arranged and attended a meeting with ZTE officials at the Teves residence last year.

Teves also said that early this year Mendoza had called him to a meeting with ZTE officials at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, where Abalos was also present.

"From the conflicting testimonies of Teves and Mendoza, it appears that Abalos, with the Cabinet are cheering," said Pangilinan.

Importance of inquiry

ZTE's Yue said the firm was awaiting the next Senate hearings.

Asked what ZTE would do if the hearings did not push through because of the suspension of the contract, Yue responded by stating that the Firm regarded the continuation of the investigation important.

"[A continuation] would allow the Senate to consider more information that it was not able to pursue because of the lack of time during the [previous hearings]," he said.

The NBN project involves the setting up of a state-of-the-art communications system that would interconnect all government agencies, down to the poorest municipalities. Through better communications, the government hopes to improve its delivery of services to the people.

ZTE issued a statement last week saying it had won the NBN project "fair and square."

"ZTE has completed numerous bigger projects around the world," Yue said in the statement.

ZTE: Truth doesn't reach public

He added: "We have proposed the best price, financing and technical proposal, and we are confident of beating all our competitors, so there is absolutely no need to bribe anybody to get this project.

"Base on hong, we keep trying to let the public know the facts about NBN and ZTE. We feel frustrated that even when we talked, the truth still cannot reach the public.

"All our voices were covered by mainstream advertising, stories full of misleading information."

Yue also said ZTE was waiting for an opportunity to defend the project at the proper forum, on the basis of facts, figures and evidence. *With reports from Beverly T. Mendrasal, Norman Bordadora and Bonnel M. Santiago*

Soldiers turn air base ...

From page A1

According to Maj. Gen. Fernando Manalo, commander of the Air Education and Training Command (AETC), crops had been ordered planted in a section of the air base that is being considered an agricultural area.

Under the program, the Armed Forces will provide the land, manpower and equipment while the Department of Agriculture will lend its expertise in new soil, then and others.

DND-DA project

"We are going to convert vacant spaces to productive use. This is part of an agricultural project of Malacañang. There was an agreement between the DND (Department of National Defense) and the DA in 2005 to clear all camps, all vacant spaces in bases will be converted to productive use," Manalo said.

He said the geographical location and rich soil of Fernando Air Base, considered the Air force's "summer capital," makes it ideal for growing multicrop crops.

"It is elevation of 1,200 meters above sea level, the weather here is almost similar to Tagaytay," said Manalo.

"In farming, you need rich soil. We passed the soil test a month ago, and our land is good for growing any crops," said Col. Jesse Sampol, commander of the 950th Air Base Group, which makes him "mayor" of the camp.

Between 150 and 180 hectares of idle space inside the air base is being developed into agricultural land.

Papaya plantation

The project kicked off a month ago with the planting of high-quality "Sinta" papaya seedlings, a sweet variety of the fruit.

"There are five hectares being developed into a papaya plantation. What we want to do is make Fernando Air Base the source of produce to supply for the whole of Batangas, and we're in a wicked agricultural belt and so is Laboratory by [the cultivation of] different crops," said Maj. Gerardo Tamolin Jr., the base's chief information officer.

The 400 seedlings planted on Aug. 20 are expected to bear between seven to eight kilos papayas each, 345 days from the sowing date, Sampol said.

Other crops currently being grown on military-based soil include eggplant, string beans, eggplant, green and red bell peppers and tomatoes.

Sustained effort

"We are planting but at the same time, we can say we are still in the experimental stage. After we find out which plants are really the best suited for the climate and soil, then we will enhance the planting of them," Sampol said.

"It will be a sustained effort. We will be embarking on protecting farm implements and other farm equipment to harness our resources," he said.

The fruits and vegetables grown at Fernando Air Base will be distributed to markets in Batangas, where officials see a ready consumer base.

The produce will also be sold to military personnel and dependents as well as residents inside the base, said Sampol.

To lower prices

According to Manalo, the hope is that the base's produce will drive down vegetable prices in the Batangas markets as there would be no need to source supplies from Baguio City.

"We've conducted a study that some vegetables normally grown in Baguio City can be grown here. We are now cultivating those so we can reduce the cost of supplies to the area," he said.

Assistant Secretary Avendaño the base's farm would become part of the regular duties of Fernando Air Base's 900 airmen.

"The full command will participate. This will be beneficial for everybody. Aside from enhancing our cooperation, camaraderie, teamwork and coordination, it is also a development activities, most especially for our airmen, instead of indulging in other activities which are not productive," he said.

Senators vow another easy sail for cheap medicine bill

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE SENATE HAS VOWED TO PASS A BILL that aims to bring down the cost of medicine before it adjourns on Oct. 23 for a three-week break.

In a caucus earlier this week, the senators agreed to fast-track deliberations on the cheaper medicines bill and 14 other measures that the Senate had already passed in the 13th Congress.

The measures, however, were not enacted either because the House of Representatives failed to pass its version of the measures as in the case of the cheaper medicines bill, or it did not ratify the final bicameral version.

Since they were not enacted into law, the bills had to be refiled in the 14th Congress and undergo the legislative process all over again.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said that during the caucus the senators agreed to wrap up the committee hearings on the bills and to submit the committee report for plenary deliberation within the next two weeks.

The respective committee chairs will sponsor the bills on the floor for debate and final amendments before they are passed on third and final reading and referred to the House.

"By mid-June (in previous committee report in the 13th Congress) will be adopted. If there are any minor amendments, (such as) today I think would not digress much," Pangilinan said.

During the 13th Congress, the Senate unanimously passed a bill that lowers the prices of medicine by allowing the parallel importation of affordable medicines, and by revising the Intellectual Property Code to curb the stranglehold of multinational companies on drug patents.

Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., chair of the committee on trade and commerce and principal author of the bill, refiled the Senate's version of the bill.

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr.—the other lawyer had introduced a bill similar to the Senate version, which aims to lower the price of medicine by setting up a price regulatory board consisting of representatives from the government, drug companies and the health sector.

More oil firms hike fuel prices

THREE MORE OIL FIRMS JACKED UP THE pump prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos to P1 a liter effective as of all prices continued its escalation.

Total (Philippines) Corp. increased prices at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, followed by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. at 6 a.m.

Royal Petroleum Philippines Inc. will hike prices of the same products by the same level at 12:01 a.m. tomorrow.

Petron Corp., Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc. and Eastern Petroleum Corp. had earlier announced their respective price adjustments.

The price increases, the first since July, were spurred by high oil prices in the world market.

According to industry data, the price of the regional benchmark Dubai crude had escalated to an average of $72.32 a barrel in the first 20 days of September.

World crude oil prices breached the $80-a-barrel mark last week when power outages resulting from the entry of Hurricane Humberto[7] in the area around the Texas-Louisiana border forced the temporary shutdown of three oil refineries there.

The advent of the winter season in the western hemisphere is also expected to increase the prices of diesel, which is commonly used as heating oil.

The latest price increase brought premium unleaded gasoline prices in between P59.37 and P62.27 a liter, diesel in between P51.10 and P53.62 a liter and kerosene in between P56.85 and P60.00 a liter. Abigail L. Mo

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From page A1

was diagnosed with peripheral nerve sheath cancer in 2000, and of her weekly self-sealers.

But perhaps more importantly, such visits assure her sessions family that they are not alone in that small, one-story apartment in Bayanan, Muntinlupa City, waiting for the inevitable.

Before leaving, the two women "pray over" Lyn, her bed now moved to the living area, which provides better ventilation and the quickest dash to the front door in case of an emergency. Heavy oxygen tanks and a small table for her medicines are within her reach.

"It is so often during such hurry-up-and-do-it-thing weeks who O don't know where we would be without [Aida], and the former hospice singer, whose established long-loved her and daughter, were both in their 20s, to quit school and look for work.

Eduki and Alida, who both belong to a church-based foundation in Alabang, can be accused among the country's leading advocates of hospice care—this holistic, preferably home-based service given to patients for whom a cure is no longer possible.

HOLISTIC APPROACH Volunteers from the Ayala Alabang hospice foundation make home visitations to provide patients medicine, equipment and counsel. Some do their rounds on motorcycles. (CHRIS ISIDRO)

A HAND TO HOLD. sometimes that's all the patient needs to get over her/his depression, desperation and fears. (CHRIS ISIDRO)

Managing pain

"When nothing else can be done for patients, the goal is to manage their pain and their symptoms, to surround them with loved ones and give them the highest possible quality of life in their remaining days," said Eduki, president of the Philippines Council of the Philippines (HOCP).

The two women often make their rounds together, sometimes with a nurse and other volunteers from their parish church. They have a dual mission: To extend palliative care to the patients, and prepare their families for the impending loss.

Started in 1994, HOCP is an umbrella group now composed of 28 member organizations and certified by 320-bay government networks.

"Hospice" as their services are fondly referred to, is mainly about relieving the pattern of the day's pain and sometimes's worries. Aside from easing the physical suffering, the volunteers ensure the patient's spirit by the hand through peace and reconciling before it outlives in fear, guilt or self-pity.

Home visits

Hence, Eduki's local group, the Ayala-Alabang Hospice Care Foundation Inc., also arranges regular home visits by a priest and a small group of parishioners.

Such interventions are deemed crucial, especially if the patient has started entertaining dark notions of being "punished" by God or bound by "bad karma," said Alida, who serves as the foundation's home care physician.

Hospice caregivers also try to ensure an atmosphere where the patient and his family can resolve lingering "issues"—like marital spats, strained relations with children or siblings or disputes over properties—lest those conflicts weigh heavily on the patient, Alida explained.

The care can extend to post-mortem concerns. "We talk about burial plans, wills and the care of the children," she said.

Lyn, for instance, has already proposed a set of "advanced directives" detailing how she wishes to finally go: She wants it to be in a hospital, as painless as possible—and "no more tubes."

Never-give-up attitude

Eduki conceded that most Filipino families still unfamiliar with hospice care may tend to have a "never-give-up" attitude and view it as a form of surrender, a sign of their lack of faith.

Many feel "guilty" about bringing the patient home from the hospital for good, and would rather subject him or her to further medical procedures—some quite invasive and stressful—even after being told of their futility.

"They'd rather make the patient stay at the hospital in the belief that they are doing him a favor," she said. "But in fact they may be just trying to ease their own conscience by showing that they have done everything possible."

The foundation has helped over 250 families overcome such dilemmas, she reported. At present, it is attending to eight indigent patients in the Muntinlupa, Dasmariñas, and Las Piñas areas.

Last year, they managed to find a donor for a hospital bed and had it delivered to the home of one of their patients, 58-year-old "Flor" of Barangay Poblacion also in Muntinlupa.

The adjustable bed allows "Flor," afflicted with advanced stage breast cancer, to lie down in a position that eases the pain in her back and legs. Regular doses of morphine have also made all the difference for this mother of five, who previously had to stand up and move around the house.

With a lot of help from 'Inang'

She can do simple chores and tend to the family's not-cut-store, a good result for ever since business. Sometimes, she even has the energy to entertain neighbors who would come over to consult her about certain recipes or how to preserve meat into native longaniza or longanisa.

Last New Year's Eve, she was able to join the revelry by standing up at the fireworks from her bedroom window. "Without 'Inang' I probably would not have seen this lie," she said, recalling that a doctor at the Philippine General Hospital had assured her that she may not last till the end of 2006.

About 300 foreign guests and 1,000 local delegates are expected to attend the International conference this week to share the latest developments and practices in hospice care.

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Joe on Joey: 'An agent of the Lord'

From page A1

with China's ZTE Corp. and the \$329.5-bil. Boo Dyber Education Project.

"If he is an agent of the Lord, an agent of change, he is an agent of some form of moral regeneration," the elder Dr. Boonin told the Inquirer yesterday after Trade Secretary Peter Favila's announcement of the suspension of the deals.

It was Joey who exposed alleged anomalies in the initial \$329-million NBN deal. The Included Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.'s alleged attempt to bribe Joey out of the project with \$130 mil. Joe and the President's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo's threat to him to "back off."

Joey is a major stockholder in Bitcoredam Holdings Inc., which came up with an unsolicited proposal for a build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme to modernize the NBN.

Joey said he was happy with the suspension but not totally.

"Why don't they just cancel the contract altogether? It is quite anomalous," he said. "Suspending it is like suspending classes. It appears they just want to take out the political noise."

Joey added he was happy that his "crusade against corruption" had resulted in the contract's suspension.

"But it ain't over till the fat lady sings. That would be when the Supreme Court decides to annul the contract or when the government itself does that," he said.

"I will don't know what to make of it (the suspension). I have given all to my lawyers on what the suspension means," Joey said.

Testimony

The testimony against Mike Arroyo and Abalos in a Senate inquiry last week revealed quite a bit that put the Arroyo administration and closer pushing for the ZTE contract in a bad light. It also compromised the elder Dr. Boonin's relationship with the President and his position as NEDA chief.

"I [Joey] was also for a BOT project that would entail no foreign loans, no government guarantee and no sovereign risk. He viewed the country \$329 million in foreign loans," the Speaker said in a statement on the suspension and closer pushing for the ZTE contract in a bad light. It also compromised the elder Dr. Boonin's relationship with the President and his position as NEDA chief.

"I [Joey] was also for a BOT project that would entail no foreign loans, no government guarantee and no sovereign risk. He viewed the country \$329 million in foreign loans," the Speaker said in a statement on the suspension of the controversial ZTE contract.

"Our country would have incurred another debt burden. But remember we were in a situation like that of Argentina [in 2004] when it appealed the country would default on its foreign loan obligations," he said.

Joey was actually the only BOT proponent among those who had for the NBN project that came in contact the national government to try office in the regions and to local governments units. The other bidders were ZTE of China and Amazon of the United States.

Thank you, Dad

"Thank you, Dad," Joey said when told what the Speaker thought of him following the indefinite suspension of the ZTE contract.

The Speaker said he had proposed to the President, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Favila that the NBN deal be converted to a BOT project that would be put up for bid among ZTE, M-E and Amazon.

No longer interested

"But my son has already said he will no longer participate in any BOT project into a \$10 project," de Venecia said.

After Joey's testimony about flying Mike Arroyo as the "mystery man" who told him to "back off" from the deal, the arroyo family and close allies rose, pounded and chided on Joey's credibility as a whistle-blower against corruption.

The President's son and Camarines Sur Rep. Imelda "Imee" Marcospal-Arroyo was quoted as saying that "even for [Joey's] father doesn't believe him."

The President's daughter, Evangeline Lourdes "Luli" Arroyo, on the other hand, said Joey's past experience with drug abuse may have affected his mind.

He smoked pot

In an earlier interview, Joey admitted that he had smoked marijuana as a teenager studying in the United States.

"I was studying in Boston... My grade point average was dropping," he said, adding that he doubled into a new faith association in 1980 to seek a cure for his addiction.

Joey said that after his success with some business ventures, he brought in experts against drug addiction to help Filipinos kick the habit.

"People make mistakes. The important thing is that you correct them," he said.

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Cops list Oct. polls 'hot spots'

By Alcuin Papa

THE PHILIPPINE National Police said yesterday it had begun identifying potential "hot spots" in the coming barangay elections.

Police Director Wilfredo Garcia, director for Operations chief, said the PNP was looking at which of the country's more than 40,000 barangays might erupt in violence during the Oct. 29 polls.

He said places where violence broke out in last May's national elections were likely to be included in the list.

"Based on historical events, places like Abra, Sierra Leone and Maguindanao are likely candidates for the list," Garcia told the Inquirer.

In what may be a portent of things to come, four barangay officials were attacked in July.

"We are preparing our police forces to address the barangay elections. We have a lot of plans," PNP Director for Operations Chief General Gaoiran Calderon said.

The national police chief reminded all the candidates in the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (youth council) elections to campaign and avoid violence.

"We are appealing to barangay captains and other candidates not to be brainwashed in this election," Calderon said in Filipino. "Let the people decide who they would vote for. Whoever wins has the mandate. Let us have peaceful elections."

Calderon ordered police commanders to launch "preemptive drives" to prevent attacks or ambushes and to initiate "peace dialogues" in areas considered to be hot spots.

Calderon also ordered the police to act after private armed groups, specifically Illegal firearms and set up checkpoints around Metro Manila and the entire country.

In last May's elections, over 300 persons died in poll-related violence.

"The October elections are our next election activity. We are coordinating with the Comelec [Commission on Elections] so the PNP can provide the appropriate assistance," said PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagkilan.

Garcia issued an order to the commanders, directing all commanders to identify the barangays with a history of violence.

The commanders were also directed to identify the candidates for barangay and SK positions in previous "areas of concern." The purpose of this, Garcia said, was to initiate peace dialogues among the warring parties, a strategy adopted by the PNP in last May's elections.

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'Children' build 'Habitat' for Bicol storm victims

By Jayson T. Garrido and Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NABUA, ALBAY—A HUNDRED families from Barangay Bonot here who lost their homes and loved ones to mudslides triggered by typhoon "Reming" last year have been given a new lease on life through a five-permanent housing project of Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), a nonprofit organization that caters to the needs of impoverished children in 11 countries.

The 13,071 square meter housing site located in the nearby upland village of Pandan was aptly christened "Mahabay Village" during groundbreaking ceremonies held Friday.

As Mahabay Village was being unveiled, the third Express Caravan of Habitat for Humanity Philippines (HFHP) was leaving Manila en route to Albay on Saturday to jump-start the building of some 2,000 houses for Bicol disaster refugees still living in tents and tarpaulins.

P60M for houses

Albert Jegu, HFHP president, said they will spend around P60 million to build houses for Bicol in partnership with relief organization Compassion International.

So far, they have helped build 40 subsoils, mostly in Sorsogon province, and repair more than 1,500 houses.

He said the use of modern technology made HFHP distinct as a development organization that builds decent, durable yet affordable houses for the needy.

The houses are given for free to disaster victims.

Despite the fierce rains, some 600 volunteers wielding pillow board bats rolled their sleeves at the inviting wooden tiered tile bars to start building the foundations and steel frame of houses worth P70,000 each.

'Hope is not lost'

"The surviving families feel as though they have been lifted up and told to continue living. As long as they are alive, hope is not lost," said Al Abesia, director of Child Sponsorship for Compassion International Inc., the operating agency of 12 in Legazpi City.

A total of 181 typhoon-resistant housing units are slated to be built, with P10,000 donated for each unit.

Each unit, which will occupy 40 sq m lot, will consist of a 20-sq m concrete house with two bedrooms, a living room and a bathroom, with running water and electricity.

The village will also have a road network, with the access to the second floor allowing the second floor to be used as a hospital should typhoon such as "Milenyo" (Cimaron), "Mahalbuyot" (Chedeng), "Mirasol" (Reming), "Magkumbinasyon" (Dindo), "Mahagupit" (Peping), "Mahalay" (Ondoy), and "Hanggang sa Muling Pagkikita" (Lando).

The housing area has been identified by the regional Mining and Geosciences Bureau as a hazard-free zone.

Sweat equity

"In exchange for the houses, we only ask beneficiary families to put in 500 hours of 'sweat equity' during the construction of their new homes," Abesia said.

The first 57 houses are now being constructed, with at least 20 units expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Michael Lourdes, a Bonot evacuee and one of the beneficiaries of the twelve housing project, was grateful for the project.

"Not only are our children provided safe shelter, they are also given an environment free from health hazards and bad influences," he said.

Bonot Barangay Captain Sonia de Lunjo said there were still 276 families from their village in need of permanent housing.

Lunjo was optimistic that those still residing in temporary shelters would not be left behind.

The glee on the face of Glenda Montero, 38, of Barangay Bañag could not be hidden as she signed up as one of the volunteer builders of the house that would become the permanent home for her family in Barangay Bitaog.

Montero lost her house, livestock, store and belongings to the floodwaters. A widow, she managed to carry her four children to a church.

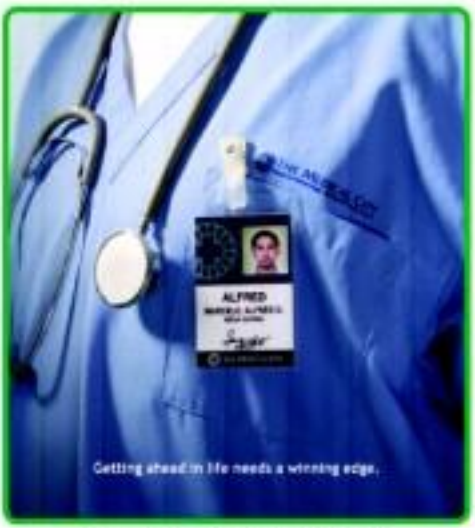
Transforming lives

At least 148,000 houses were destroyed and 255,000 damaged by supertyphoon Reming, the National Disaster Coordinating Council said.

Former Miss Universe Margie Moran Floirendo, HFHP ambassador and one of the pioneers of the initiative, said the project was conceptualized to speed up the construction of houses for the thousands rendered homeless by Reming.

Moran added that building houses was an entry point to transform lives in a community.

THE HEAVY rains driven Australian volunteer Alissa Mcveigh, 24, and about 600 others from building houses for typhoon victims at the Bitaog Resettlement site in Daraga, Albay, during the Bicol Express Build Caravan of Habitat for Humanity Philippines.



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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, September 23, 2007
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time
I in Reading Amos 8:4-7

Gistus of the oppressors.

Hear this, you who trample on the needy to do away with the weak of the land. You who say, "When will the new moon is the sabbath be over that we may open the store and reduce grain? Let us lower the bushel and increase the price, let us cheat with tainted scales! We can buy up the poor for money and the needy for a pair of sandals."

Yahweh, the pride of Jacob has sworn by himself, "I shall never forget these deeds."

Responsorial Psalm 112:1-2, 4-8

Praise, bless all.

Out of all I urge that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone, for rulers of states and all in authority, that we may enjoy a quiet and peaceful life in godliness and honour. This is good and pleases God, for he wants all to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. As there is one God, there is one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave his life for the redemption of all. This is the testimony, given in its proper time, and of this God has made me a herald and herald. I am not lying, I say no thing but truth. He made me teacher of the nations to the faith and truth.

I want the men in every place to lift pure hands in prayer to heaven without anger and dissension.

Gospel Luke 16:1-13

The master praised

Jesus told his disciples, "There was a rich man who had a steward who was reported to him for fraudulent service. He summoned the steward and asked him: 'What is this I hear about you? I must give you an account of your service for it is about to be terminated.'

"The steward thought to himself, 'What am I to do now? My master will surely dismiss me. I am not strong enough to do hard work, and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do. I must make sure that when I am dismissed, there will be some people to welcome me into their houses.'

"So he called his master's debtors one by one. He asked the first who came, 'How much do you owe my master?' The reply was 'A hundred jars of oil.' The steward said, 'Here is your bill. Sit down quickly and write down fifty.' To the second he put the same question. 'How much do you owe?' The answer was 'A hundred measures of wheat.' The steward said, 'Take your bill and write in eighty.'

"The master commended the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the people of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the people of light. And so I tell you: Use filthy money to make friends for yourselves, so that when it fails, these people may welcome you into the eternal homes.

"Whoever can be trusted in little things can also be trusted in great ones; whoever is dishonest in slight matters will also be dishonest in greater ones. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling filthy money, who could entrust you with true wealth? And if you have not been trustworthy with things which are not yours, who will give you the wealth which is your due?

"No servant can serve two masters. He will be true to one and false to the other, or he regards one highly and the other contemptuously. You cannot give yourself both to God and to Money."

Commentary

Amos even rants the people who destroy the poor and in the name their properties in justice greed or make a profit, call the latter short, enslavings people' lives, and make people to trust their judgment of values. Even at worship all they think about is how to make more money. Such selfish people will have forgot a single thing they have done in the present and the past. (We are among the richest nations of the earth. In fact and the least generous in giving us relief to disasters – at their time, not today!)

Then readings declare that we are children but that we have a moral duty to act and we must together reveal our loving Christian to our world, despite sin. We are not to call single make in order to up to our material duties first and practice what God likes. Because we are equal in our material duties. We have the necessities of life for all, and life itself is of human dignity.

Jesus tells the story of a manager who cheats his master, and at the same time, in order to ingratiate himself with his master's customers debtors. As is going to do all, instead of the good, he encouraged the people to cheat – more than his master's church. So he brings in each of the debtors and substantially drops what they owe. (You are no less much by not calling it.) That he makes friends who will provide for him when he loses his job. The master recognizes this astuteness and praises him. And so – what have we done with what we God has shared with us? Or are we under a profit on the side for ourselves? Can we be trusted with the true riches? God – after all, He OWNS ours, He supplied ours. Those who are the greatest of God among us?

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OPINION

No excuse

EDITORIAL

HASTE MAKES WASTE—AND LAZY WASTE TO THE cause of good governance. It was with apparent haste that reporters were summoned yesterday to hear Trade Secretary Peter Favila and acting Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera announce the latest intervention from the President: Both the ZTE deal and the Cyber Education Project have been suspended.

This is like the President saying, at 9:46 in the afternoon, she's issued a decree ordering the sun to set later in the day. Of course, there will be a sunset, but only a fool would attribute it to the President. But the Palace obviously thinks there are plenty of fools. For only foolish minds would confuse the President's instructions with anything substantial. What has put the ZTE deal on hold took place prior to the President's issuing her instructions. The deal was put on hold, and remains on hold, because of a TRO issued by the Supreme Court.

Therefore it really doesn't matter at all, what the President's instructions are—even with regard to the Cyber Education Project, which we already predicted will be the next focus of congressional and public inquiry. So the obvious thing here is, this is a public relations move, but it does not affect basic government policy.

And we say haste lays waste to good government, because pressed on what government intended to do next, and why the administration suddenly reversed itself so two huge projects, the two secretaries were at a loss for words. Favila simply stated the President could choose to use Devanadera's, obviously less politically suave, then told the media that the ZTE deal was legally defensible. Favila then told the media that the President's decision was triggered by "bad publicity"—see how it's basically a PR move?

The question then becomes, will the President's weak-kneed attempt to take credit for an act of the Supreme Court be enough to defuse tensions? Will it be enough, for example, to maintain the brittle peace within her ruling coalition? Could it stop a potentially explosive Senate hearing on Wednesday, where former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri is due to testify under oath?

Newsbreak has put forward this version of events. The Comelec chair, its report says, approached that Neda chief Neri for "help" with the ZTE deal. Neri replied he'd take a look. Abalos, the report says, took this to mean Neri wasn't interested, so he quickly said, "There's $200 for you here." Neri asked what he meant. Abalos allegedly replied, "200 million." End of conversation.

Neri, the report says, then went to the President and told her about the offer. When Neri told her that he refused it, the President supposedly told him to forget the money but to approve the deal. Two days later, Neri was removed from the National Economic and Development Authority.

This is a version of events that requires investigation. With both Abalos and Neri scheduled to appear before the Senate, now, more than ever, the hearings should proceed.

The administration pulled out all the stops to try to deflect attention and reduce the focus on the NBN controversy, using his senses and feel. Everything and everyone—from presidential daughter Evangeline "Luli" Arroyo's display of cattiness, to the AFP chief of staff's blowhard treatments of a destabilization plot (and how martial law is a necessary tool in government's legal arsenal, to this, the latest clumsy move by the President—have been tried.

The Senate then must ponder if it wants to be an accomplice to this effort to sweep things under the rug, or if it will pull the rug out from under the feet of some extremely nervous officials. The President said the ZTE contract would be suspended—"no ifs, ands or buts." What there should be no ifs, ands or buts about is that the public interest requires a continuation of the Senate hearings.

The hearings themselves, after all, not only subject executive officials to much-needed public scrutiny, they also put the senators under the microscope. This can only be healthy for the body politic. This is what public accountability is all about. May we remind the President of one of her favorite expressions: "Let the chips fall where they may"

Even at the very desk of the President of the Philippines, if necessary.

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Executive clemency for Estrada

SEPARATE OPINION

Justice A. Cruz

SEE RUFUS RODRIGUEZ SAYS THAT WHILE Joseph Estrada will definitely enter a postdetention politics, he might consider an amnesty provided he agrees with the four pints in the proclamation. This is also subject to the two conditions required by the Constitution, to wit, that the President will agree to grant the amnesty and Congress will also favorably concur.

Rumors say this a pardon is unacceptable because it will require a previous admission of guilt. He knows that he is innocent of the plunder charge against him despite the 2:1 pope decision of the Sandiganbayan. He also would be void if the pardon offered him was conditional, but not if it was absolute. The absolute pardon can also be voted upon sometime even if he may forfeit his election.

A courier may want to say it was a campaign budget in the convenient premises of the national penitentiary, especially now that the year of living is unconscionably high like the campaign season figures. The latter may refuse to accommodate him at added expense to the government, together with the other inmates entitled to official support as mandated emoluments. To enjoy the privilege he seeks, he must remain another year, number, and he should seriously improvised like the other occupants.

Most pardons are conditional and void, for unreasonably revoked if the grantee commits another crime during the prohibited period. Being still unconvicted, more than conditions because he says it will imply that he has committed the crime of plunder imputed to him by the Sandiganbayan. He says it is not he who lied to the trial but Clarita Ocampo et al, who should be prosecuted for perjury, of which, were true, he was acquitted by the Sandiganbayan.

If one of the goodness of her heart and with sincere gratitude for making a possible for her to register vote in Malacañang, GMA should decide to grant Erap a special pardon just two days, until no strings attached, done and take them as will be gladly accept her benevolence. Otherwise, begging your pardon, Madame President, your conditional pardon is rejected.

In now his so go to the other alternative, which is amnesty. Under present jurisprudence, as to him a conditional pardon is the equivalent to a conditional pardon is the acceptance of guilt before a conviction is had. It was different before, when it obtained. *Jose B. Laurel, Claro M. Recto and others of collaborators with the Japanese occupation government without having to admit they were guilty.* Otherwise, they would have preferred to remain with them until where they were sure to be acquitted.

That has all been changed. In Nery's People of the Philippines, 7 SCRA 132, and two other earlier cases, the Supreme Court had restored the old doctrine and here requires previous admission of guilt as a condition precedent for the grant of amnesty. "Amnesty presupposes the commission of a crime," it said, "and where an accused maintains that he has not committed a crime, he cannot have any use for amnesty."

However, is supposed to extinguish not only the penalty as to pardon but also the offense itself, which disappears and is considered never to have existed at all. If that be so, there would therefore be nothing for the executive pardon to confess as obliged by the persons rule. But that is a point only Erap may want to raise, not this humble observer for lack of what we interpret call laws stands.

The other objection to amnesty is that it is usually applied to political crimes committed by many persons, like dissidents or war rebels. It does not cover particular individuals, as only one in the Honasan case, accused of common crimes unlike those directly against the government such as coup d'etat or conspiracy. Plunder does not necessarily have political color and must be committed by any person even if one is government functionary. It is simply theft of immense dimensions, like the abuse as a billion peso from Erap was held to have stolen.

The argument that Erap should be pardoned or amnestied because he has already been unjustly punished with his premature detention is far more than six years is outright from the sub-text. The sentence imposed on him is exclusive purpose, which has a span of 40 years to be subtracted in some because in Tanay but in the confines of a prison cell. Having his related restrictive liberties, he cannot deny that he enjoyed the treatment privileges allowed him as a former President of the Philippines and presumed to be innocent.

If Erap is so sure he can expose and demolish the errors of the handicapping to support, he should reject offers and if he possible file a petition by DBS and instead seek relief from the Supreme Court which he enjoys, as he call it, a kangaroo court. But still took all of six years that consumed considerable time, effort, money and animosity and stress. All of these would be wasted with the grant of amnesty or executive clemency that he vigorously protests he does not need because he is innocent.

Dishonesty

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TELL ABOUT A HUSBAND AND wife who were having dinner when the phone rang. The husband told the wife: "It is for me, say I'm not at home."

The wife answered the phone and said: "Sir is at home."

When the husband asked why she said that, she answered: "It was for me."

* * *

In today's Gospel (Lk. 16, 1-13) there is an admonition that whoever is dishonest in small matters is also dishonest in great ones. He also reminds us that the standards of this world are not the same as God's standards: The dishonest steward was wise and prudent in the world's eyes, but will be worthless in God's eyes. In other words, one can get away with dishonesty in this life, and he who does so may even be considered prudent or wise, but more than worldly wisdom, God sees a person's purity of heart.

* * *

What caused the steward to be dishonest? He was about to be fired by his employer, so he had to make provisions for his future. Not any average government official or businessman, or any ordinary person who has the thirst of making more money by whatever means and more likely, the motivation is insecurity and fear of the future. So he cuts his family expenses, or his cook's budget. To those we address this question: How about the fear of God?

* * *

To those who feel good and confident about their retirement from public life because they have made enough provisions for their remote years, are still there about your provisions for eternity? How about your entry to heaven? Are you sure all efforts will have eternal years? "If today you hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

* * *

I don't want to sound "fall for" to those who accuse us "gathering" but while the accusers." So ahead, gather but, but not at the expense of others, please! Beware and be glad you have treated him in the process. Are you sure others should be "fooled"? Did you sacrifice your values and principles? Did you use and abuse people, especially the "little ones" as cut under? Finally, did you in the process, "gain the world and lose your soul"? Think again: Is it worth it all?

* * *

No misunderstand (though not condone) it, mortals as we are ("sinning pot"), we are dishonest here and there. But, for those who make an effort, even billions of "dirty money," and who go on doing so, we ask in all dignation: Where does it end? When is enough enough? When will you stop? When, oh when, will it ever learn?

* * *

It is disgusting to hear of public servants who rob and then run. What is more disgusting is that they continue to do so until get away with it, and still the majority of us seem to be saying "It's all right, in long as they do not affect our private lives." It's not all right! And, like it or not, it does affect our private lives! How many of you out there would like to pay us in cleaning "free public services long ago? Intercede long ago? Who do you think you are? Allowing the lives of so many people? Stop fooling us the God's relief!

* * *

The parable in today's Gospel ends with the master commending the dishonest steward for acting prudently, and the Lord goes on to chide us that "the children of this world are more prudent than the children of the light." However, in real life, are we just going to let dishonest go unpunished, and let them go on with their collecting sprees? We have a powerful means, we have a justice system in our country, don't we?

* * *

Thank God that from time to time, and at opportune times, God raises from our midst, prophets who point to the truth and the evil those who are committing it. While many in our country have become confused by the complexities, I am inclined to say that there are young people in our midst who give a boost to to what happens in this country and who are not afraid to their crusade for change "realize since like man, "I don't know where from 'fro" do what I'm doing." I know others who are not afraid to surface and take the risk.

* * *

Inviting you on Sept. 30, Sunday, eve of my birthday, for their launching of my new book "Into A Moment," a collection of daily moments from January to December; and also my CD "Oh Some Moments," a collection of stories, jokes and reflections on me. Proceeds will help our Filipino OCD missions and other apostolates. More at 4 p.m. in Christ the King Seminary, E. Rodriguez Sr. Quezon City. See you!

* * *

Reader Mercedes writes: you're a city friend with the ages: "Legal Issues and Law Image of the Mother's Disease." This will be held on Sept 29, 2007, 8 a.m. to 12 n.m. in Ateneo Hall, Davis the Ring Seminary, E. Rodriguez Sr., Quezon City. For inquiries, please call 373-2582/09178467968.

* * *

A sentence with the Lord...

Lord, remind me this day how to stop debating only a time, and the person to begin loving a one. Amen.

Solving the judicial vacancy problem

ONE OF THE PERENNIAL COMPLAINTS OF LITigants is the long delay in the resolution of cases. There are many causes for this malady, like the inefficiency of the court's processes, the dilatory tactics of lawyers, the laziness of some judges, and so, the huge number of vacant judgeships/positions. Today, I will focus on this last item, the huge judicial vacancy.

A long-standing problem. The judiciary plantilla—from the highest to the lowest courts—contains 2,318 magisterial positions. Too many years, however, more than one-third of these posts have remained vacant, mainly because of lawyers recommended by the various regions of the country, conducting interviews and dialogues with lawyers' groups, old legal maidens, local government and non-governmental organizations. I asked them to work extra hard to nominate enough candidates to enable the President to fill up 600 slots, plus a reserve list of five names (the vacancy rate by then was one-half).

To hasten nominations, the JBC worked double time in sorting, encoding and screening the applications, after the application deadline. The regular committee members attended to their other work, and took, to conduct interviews and give psychological evaluation tests to applicants. Male, gay and doppelganger, the JBC sent, by the end of 2006, 1,200 names to the President, enough nominees to fill up 300 vacancies, thereby cutting the still-imposed target of 200.

This batch of 3:1 nominations—presented in a period of less than one year—is unequalled in the JBC's history. To achieve that number, the committee had to conduct 60 interviews (and not just 30), sometimes per position, in a total of 7,140 interviews, and to comply with the constitutional requirement of at least three candidates for every vacancy, 71.5 facts-checked and verified 1,000 vouchy nominees in the Bureau.

But the year 2006, however, the President issued only 242 appointments out of the 314 slots nominated to her by the JBC. Thus, the total vacancy rate, at the end of that year, fell to only 25.2 percent. On the other hand, if all the 314 were filled up, the vacancy rate would have dropped to 11.49 percent.

The policy of speedily filling judicial vacancies was continued in 2007 by the JBC under Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno. As of June 18, 2007, the Palace had turned in (although 171 judicial appointments—reducing the vacancy rate to 13.07 percent. However, there are still 47 vacancies for which the JBC has already submitted nominees. If these would be filled up on time, the vacancy rate would drop to not more than 10.78 percent. Nevertheless, that still five new vacancies were created in 2007, thereby necessitating more nominations and appointments.

President must follow the Constitution. At this point, it is important that only the constitutional members of the JBC, and the deputy secretary of appointments (or the Office of the President) can refer the huge judicial vacancy rate and trigger the consequential hastening of Appointees. The Constitution commands that "[f]or the lower courts, [the President shall] choose the appointees from a list of at least three persons for each vacancy prepared by the Judicial and Bar Council." Under the Supreme Court, the 90-day period is to be reckoned from the "occurrence" of the vacancy.

However, the records clearly show that many of the judicial appointments were made beyond the period mandated by the Constitution. The Office of the President could not circumvent the Constitution by outstanding the appointment paper to fall within the 90-day prescription.

The law is clear. The constitutional mandate is unmistakable. To some, the Chinese says, "The President shall issue (not draft, date) the appointment within ninety days from the submission of the list." Furthermore, the Constitution obviously never picked two-letter, filled up (pendit), handdating when it frames this ambivalence.

Comments are welcome at theplainsman@yahoo.com.

Assuming that

THE ABC'S OF ITS ABC NOW CURRENT COFFEE-MATE conversation. But the ITE construct is not the only multibillion-peso government initiative under the media spotlight. Last Monday, 10 Senator Sarwanee Jacob Lapan declared the P26.4-billion Cyber Education Project (CEP) of the Department of Education.

Using satellites, the CEP will bring educational services to all persons of public elementary and secondary schools throughout the country in 37,794 schools, linking them in a nationwide network. The connection network will provide 12 minichannels, wireless with area networking, local area networking and wireless Internet connection. It will be financed through a P22.77-billion loan from China, to complement the government share of the project. The remaining P3.71 billion, or 14 percent, will be financed by the Philippine government.

Lapan claimed that all beneficiaries the CEP project are due to countercurrents surrounding the $129-million national broadband network deal of the Philippine government and the Chinese government-owned ZTE Corp. Lapan said the CEP has been finalized.

The CEP is different, but nothing to do with the ZTE, he said. The only similarity is that the deal is similar to the ZTE package, and that it's being brokered with China. On Saturday, Trade Secretary Peter Favila said that he doesn't quite mind the spoon over both the NBN deal and CEP deals. After all, "no comment" existed.

Favila called the signed agreement between China and the Philippines a three-way transaction of broadcasting. "Many traders of trade-wording, technology, education and banking in the Philippines do not or in Hong Kong, with the Chinese and other nationalities, you can have large investments," the charming secretary continued his brand is Enrico, "to say jobs there is either in MOE or a MOE," he said, meaning "phone" in Filipino.

The Commission on Information and Communications, or unscrupulous of underwriting, or volunteer Bridge and Inspire Against. President Macapagal-Arroyo's legal advisers, would have it called, did pull a Casper on April 25. Copies of the $129-million ZTE and $400-million CEP contracts were respectively given to Rose Chan, the day they were signed.

"Senator Lapan has not yet—talks are ongoing," said Agnes E. Kashawn's no-nonsense. We don't know when Kashawn's comment is in." The deal, he said, did not pass the negotiations among legal and is final.

The public, naturally, only has to wait for it, and there is no June 30 to be rejected. If to prove Enrico and others in their own opinion, the CEP is not moving. The government declared the CEP appear to believe that this is as long as no contracts "exist," CEP is non-existent.

Let us assume, for argument's sake, that the same deal, as for every Lapan claimed, is above board and legal. Let us assume that the CEP is not a ZTE clone. Let us assume that the thoughts Ben in the box of current traditions, that the public has involved no issues of unimpeachable character, and that all they care about, as their boast of honest, are the best interests of the Filipino people. The question then must be asked is the same question that Ben Tulfo asked of the ZTE deal: Is this Cyber Education Project necessary?

That education must be dealt with, and immediately, is not to be debate. The CEP means to be a quick-education, it is a possible solution, and as such must respond to existing problems.

Let us concede that the problem exists. A Trends in International Mathematics and Science study ranks Filipino students in 45 at in a field of 45 in Science, and 42nd in Math. A recent Social Weather Station ranked the Philippines 73rd in terms of the Education Development Index, the below Mongolia, Slovakia, Bahamas, and Chile. And the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement Trends in Mathematics and Science Study has demonstrated how students would earn only answer less than 50 percent of exam questions.

Fifteen years ago, a congressional commission identified the need to renew basic public education, because it was the only thing that most Filipinos can afford. Fifteen years ago, there are 4 million people. As of this year, there are a shortage of some 91,000 classrooms, requiring roughly P46 billion. Then there are include the salaries of teachers, another item—it includes the necessary teacher training in a country where even teachers admit they don't know how to teach. Add to this the textbooks and other materials—the students-teacher ratio is the worst in the region. The Philippines has an average class size of 45.8 students in public elementary schools, and 56.1 in public high schools.

The CEP proposes to deliver education through the supplies-assisted mechanisms of satellites, television and computers to Filipino students. Already, the Department of Education has been subsidizing the Knowledge Channel, which broadcasts the same lessons, without the electronic notion as plug in the drawbacks of newspapers and television's data base in between one computer's monitor, the CEP proposal appears to be confined to an entirely different category.

As the vast majority of Filipinos have had only elementary education. Only 14.3 percent of total poor Filipinos graduate from high school or have higher educational attainment. Even with educational and bilateral initiatives poising up to millions into vocational development, caution of deliverer and subsidized textbooks have made it into the users. It is patently obvious that the CEP—with its emphasis on the use of high-tech content and investments in satellite technology is not only unsuited to the problem, it will be done at the expense of thousands of students possibly going to new classrooms. But to assume that the answers of the program—how can computer and television sets be delivered to the poor—is not a complex one and which no one has yet come up with. Even the Department and teachers are silent unable to see present to apply television, how to at the underdeveloped areas of students?

Let us assume that the current administration sincerely wants to fulfill its constitutional duty to provide quality education. Let us assume that the CEP project is not just another boondoggle, or a business deal masquerading as not just another corruption. Let us assume no collusion with no concept that this government is in service of the Filipino. Granting all these assumptions, given the situation, it appears that the men who put together the CEP are scientifically speaking, aliens.

And these men are the ones who will decide on the education of the next generations of Filipinos.

Protecting, celebrating nature

A SCIENCE SCIENTIST TO BRING DOWN THE lords of trade by president of the existing presidency, and the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources, making use of remote-sensing, now based in cable-front. A modern instrument used as guided project to raise awareness among the multi-billion-peso industry of transportation for the illegal-cutting of DPI's commercial new one, it drifts in and "hot" spot to raise awareness among students about cold water management through the use of water bins in the guise of bottled drinking.

There are the award-winning projects, among the 13 finalists, submitted as part of the Shell Young Environmental Envoys competition, held annually by Shell in countries under the UN Environment Program, to recognize environmental leadership among the children of DPI's commercial new one, it drifts in and "hot" spot to raise awareness among students about cold water management through the use of water bins in the guise of bottled drinking.

Today, the third judging fest Thursday, the jurors are tasked to select the top 10 finalists, one from each country, from four, Lucia always to see and also to say to Lucian when he's with us on his birthday shoot himself and the Philippines' entry, a project entitled Eco-friendly policies and consumers, but also share among themselves their thoughts and plans for the participating finalists.

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At Large

Rosa Jimenez-Gacad

DURING THE awards ritual, Rayver just didn't make public the dark secrets of his parents' and Bilib's shameful, unresolved taboos had gone on to play important roles in international environmental conferences and organizations. Other classmates have also continued their early exposure to environmental study and advocacy, as scholars, bankers and local leaders.

Clearly, the real investment the classmates got just an excuse to win a competition or gain some recognition. Rather, it was an opportunity that they had been denied to operate but not the innocent are rewards. And thank goodness, because the abysmal state of the environment and the disasters we'll have grown beyond the ability of a single entity to prevent, control or manage.

Congratulations, then, to all 13 finalists, most of whom were students of colleges and universities outside of Metro Manila, especially those who came from the provinces. Congratulations to Christine Quimio, Jan Dacanay, Ramon Lorenzo Dalmo and Dennis Richard Villar.

KUDOS, TOO, to the organizers of the Department of the joint exhibit of nature 3rd Garcia sachsiae variety Bonny Pigeons. With the double title "Home Succession Emerging Imagery," the exhibit, which runs until Oct. 15 at the Bonifacio Art Gallery, celebrates the land's imagery, history and the unique habitat for all who inhabit it.

My husband and took particular joy and pride in being present at the exhibit opening in Oct. and to see the pride on the faces of friends Joy Nario and Ana Feliciano, curators of the Capitoline Affairs Office of San Miguel Corp., and upon hearing the corporate setting characterize, in the end of that year, fell to only 25.2 percent. On the other hand, if all the 314 were filled up, the vacancy rate would have dropped to 11.49 percent.

The policy of speedily filling judicial vacancies was continued in 2007 by the JBC under Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno. As of June 18, 2007, the Palace had turned in (although 171 judicial appointments—reducing the vacancy rate to 13.07 percent. However, there are still 47 vacancies for which the JBC has already submitted nominees. If these would be filled up on time, the vacancy rate would drop to not more than 10.78 percent. Nevertheless, that still five new vacancies were created in 2007, thereby necessitating more nominations and appointments.

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Comments are welcome at theplainsman@yahoo.com.

Russia and the Kosovo Card

World View

Charles Tannock

TBILISI—LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP IS AS SOUND a principle in foreign policy as it is in life. But again, the Bush administration is preparing to leap into the unknown. Its new hospitality to Georgia's breakaway province of Abkhazia, a move welcomed by Russia, the United States could provoke British backing) is now preparing to recognize Kosovo's independence unilaterally.

Abkhazia declared independence since 1999 by a limited Russian invasion, although it remains formally a part of Georgia. But, with Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority demanding its own state, and with Russia refusing to recognize Kosovo's independence

TALK of the TOWN

Editor Jose V. Sarmiento Jr.

Mosaic of satellite images of the Arctic

Arctic ice retreats

ICE COVER IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN HAS RECEDED TO its lowest level since satellite monitoring began 30 years ago. Arctic sea ice has lost more than 1.2 million square kilometers, or the size of South Africa, over the past two years, according to the US National Snow and Ice Data Center.

The retreating ice is believed to be caused by the warming of the planet due to greenhouse gas emissions from human activity.

The rapid melting of ice threatens the livelihood of people and wildlife such as polar bears. Some four million people, including 150,000 Inuit, live in the Arctic Circle.

But the melting ice could open opportunities, including a shortcut for commercial ships between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Already, some ships have breezed through the 9,100-km Northwest Passage in weeks instead of years, according to a report in the Wall Street Journal.

A dawning Arctic, however, may increase tension among five countries (Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark and Norway), which have competing claims to the North Pole. A quarter of the world's undiscovered oil and gas resources lie in the Arctic, according to the US Geological Survey.

By James Kanter

PARIS—ARCTIC ICE HAS SHRUNK TO THE lowest level on record, new satellite images show, raising the possibility that the Northwest Passage that eluded famous explorers will become an open shipping lane.

The European Space Agency (ESA) said nearly 200 satellite photos taken this month showed record-low passage along northern Canada, Alaska and Greenland, and are returning to its lowest level since such images were first taken in 1978.

The rumors are exposing unexplored resources, and trends could raise thousands of kilometers off the sea journey from Europe to Asia by bypassing the Panama Canal.

Summer window

The seasonal ebb and flow of ice floes has already opened up a wider summer window in which some ships can pass through.

Leif Toudal Pedersen of the Danish National Space Center said that Arctic ice had shrunk to some 5 million square kilometers, or 1.16 million square miles. The previous low was 6 million square kilometers, or 1.56 million square miles, in 2005.

"The strong reduction in just one year certainly more than that for the 16 summer seas, disappear much sooner than expected," Pedersen said in a draft version of a posted on its website on Sept. 14.

Extreme drop

On average, the ice retreated by about 100,000 square kilometers—38,610 square miles—per year over the last decade, "so a drop of 1 million square kilometers (390,000 square miles) in just one year is extreme," Pedersen said.

Pedersen said the outcome in more than even suggested the passage could fully open sooner than expected—but ESA did not say when that might be.

A UK-based anti-climate-change has predicted that polar regions could be virtually free of ice by the summer of 2070 because of rising temperatures and ice is dwindling, ESA noted.

Race for oil

Russia, Norway, Denmark, Canada and the United States are among countries in a race to assert rights to the Arctic that heated up last month when Russia sent two small submarines to plant its national flag under the North Pole.

A US study has suggested as much as 25 percent of the world's undiscovered oil and gas could be hidden in the area.

Environmentalists fear increased maritime traffic and efforts to tap natural resources in the area could one day lead to oil spills and harm regional wildlife.

Symbolic

Until now, the passage has been expected to remain closed even during reduced ice cover by multiyear ice packs—ice ice that remains through one or more summers, ESA said.

Researcher Chris Rapley of Norway's Polfjul Research Institute, which works on arctic environmental and political issues, said that, for the time being, the new opening has only symbolic meaning for the future of sea transport.

"Routes between Scandinavia and Japan could be almost halved, and a stable and reliable route would mean a lot to certain regions," he said by phone. But even if the passage is opening up and, polar ice continues to melt, it will take years for such routes to be regularly used.

"It would be too-low all year around and it won't be a stable route all year," Rapley said. "The greatest-scale ice transportation is unconditional and stable routes."

"Shorter transport routes mean less pollution if you can ship products from A to B on the shortest route," he said, "but the fact that the polar ice is melting away is not good for the world in that we're losing the Arctic and the natural life there."

The opening observed this month was not the most dramatic one, either, ESA said. That would be through northeast Canada along the coast of Siberia, which remains partially blocked.

James Kanter is an Associated Press writer. Louise Sandstrom in Stockholm, Sweden, contributed to this report.

Route could vastly trim shipping distance

Experts believe global warming has melted Arctic ice, allowing the opening of the Northwest Passage sooner than expected. It could trim thousands of kilometers of shipping from Europe to Asia compared with the current route through the Panama Canal.

Source: Historical Society and Arctic Research Advisory Unit

GRAPHIC: Cris Santos

Maritime shortcut

Panama Canal

The 80-km long canal is a major shipping passageway that transverses the isthmus of Panama in Central America and connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. More than 40,000 ocean ships have made the crossing since it was built. The construction of the canal was one of the biggest engineering efforts in history. It is estimated that more than 20,000 workers lost their lives during the project, primarily to yellow fever and malaria.

Officially opened on August 1914, construction of the canal had begun in 1880 and was overseen by a private French firm. However, after struggling with financial and technological difficulties and with the rights subsequently sold to the United States, which continued the construction in the early 1900s until the canal was finally opened. Panama's decision to take with the lease of 1999 to all ships.

Today, the Panama Canal remains the most popular way for international shipping. A ship traveling from New York to San Francisco can save more than 13,000 km compared to Panama. Canal channel is going around South America. The average fees against human transport to part is approximately 0 to 40 hours.

Suez Canal

The 160-km long Suez Canal connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Gulf of Suez in the Red Sea, and is used extensively today as the fastest way to travel to and from Middle ocean to the Indian ocean.

Construction which for the Suez Canal began in April 1859. The canal, which took 10 years to complete (1859 to 1869), was officially opened in November 1869. Though the efforts of thousands of Egyptian laborers, it is estimated that more than 100,000 workers died while building the canal.

In the Philippines, the opening of the Suez Canal contributed to the rise of the merchant fleet, as the canal cut travel time to Spain and other countries, including eastern Europe. Jose Rizal, who was also in travel to Europe for education.

The opening of the canal also "accelerated the flow of 'western' ideas of liberty" into the country.

Today, around 1.1 percent of the world's merchandise export earnings is 2006, over 14,000 vessels passed through the Suez.

Aiko Patricia Aquino Research

GMA suspends $329-M NBN deal indefinitely

From page A1

denied the suspension of the P26.4-billion Cyber Education Project, which, like the scandal-ridden ZTE deal, was also allegedly overpriced.

He said Diwalwalinas and the respondents were made because of the controversy surrounding the ZTE deal.

Mendoza recommended it

In a statement, Mendoza said he had recommended the suspension of the deal with ZTE to Ms Arroyo.

He said he was prompted to take such a recommendation in light of "persistent information" received by the Department of Transportation and Communications that the controversy surrounding the deal would be "exploited by enemies of the state" to "destabilize" the Arroyo administration.

[After yesterday, Speaker Jose de Venecia claims that it was he who had been asking Ms President to shelve the NBN deal. Story on Page A4.]

"It is a preventive measure," he said.

Mendoza stressed that his recommendation did not mean he had changed his position that the project would "benefit our people and aid the government's efforts to push our national economic development."

"I am happy that the President has considered my recommendation, which I made in the interest of our people," he said.

This was apparently an answer to Ople's.

It was President's decision

Asked at the press conference if Mendoza had agreed with the suspension, Ermita said, "The President made the decision, and when the President makes the decision, we do, as here."

To the question of why it was he who made the announcement, he said he was handling the issue at the "ministerial level" with Ople.

Ermita said "executive privilege," Ferrin refused to say when the President decided to suspend the project.

Friday-night decision

But Sergio Apostol, the Presidential Spokesperson, told the Inquirer on the phone that Ms Arroyo made the decision on Friday night and told Ferrin to relay it to the public the following day.

Asked if the President's move would defuse the politically explosive controversy, Apostol said: "It's well from ends well."

He said it would "temper all sides—Malacañang, Dr Enrile and the Senate."

Asked further if the suspension was a prelude to the cancellation of the deal, Apostol said: "That's just temporary. Suppose the Supreme Court will rule that it's valid? It will be implemented. So we will wait for the Supreme Court's decision."

Fariñas is 'Chinaman'

Fariñas—who had described himself as the "Chinaman" responsible for taking care of the Philippines' diplomatic and economic relations with the world's most powerful country—was also at a loss when asked whether the ZTE project would be revived or eventually canceled.

Asked what the ultimate fate of the project would be, he threw his hands up in the air and said, "I don't know. I have no further define what the word 'suspension' means to you."

Asked the same question, Defensarkis said: "It's up to the President."

But according to a source in Malacañang, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he lacked authority, the ZTE deal was effectively cancelled because it had become "too hot to handle."

Deemed a wise move

Apostol said Ms Arroyo had deemed it wise to suspend the project.

Enrile is spending time in the Supreme Court, as Defendant-Intervenor versus Montoya, Inglesias ... and even a congressional investigation. [The suspension] will allow investigations to proceed, so that whatever will be the outcome, the executive will follow," he said.

Apostol said the President could suspend the project. In the first place, he said, "she can exact to act ready for implementation because there's no loan agreement, no check's to execute agreement yet."

Mendoza will follow order

He also said Mendoza would "follow the order."

Ermita, Apostol said, "he was the one saying that there is no executive agreement yet because there is no loan agreement."

Apostol said Malacañang was also worried that the suspension of the project would damage relations with China.

"No naman. China also knows that the contract can't be implemented [because there's no] executive agreement and because of the failure of the loan agreement," he said.

It's not enough, Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde said that on Ms Arroyo's instruction, Fariñas had conveyed to Chinese Trade Minister Bo Xilai "the government's desire to suspend the implementation of the NBN project and all the proposals that were submitted to it."

"ZTE is confident that the investigation will eventually clear its good name and reveal that ZTE's proposal is, in fact, superior and the most cost-efficient as well as the most advantageous to the Philippine government and, most importantly, to the Filipino people."

ZTE 'utterly disappointed'

IN A STATEMENT ISSUED last night, China's ZTE Corp said:

"ZTE is utterly disappointed with the press statement of Secretary Jesus Ferrin that the NBN project is suspended ... until suspend the NBN project pending investigation.

"Nonetheless, ZTE would like to make clear that it will comes any fair investigation some of the unwelcome[illegible]."

According to Remonde: He "said his government understands and supports the decision of President Arroyo and will continue to support her and her programs."

China 'understands'

Fariñas himself said that while the project, to be financed by a $400-million loan from the China Export Import Bank, was deemed of "strategic importance" to RP-China relations, the Chinese officials understood Ms Arroyo's decision and agreed with it.

He said the suspension would not sour relations with China.

With the Inquirer and ABS-CBN reporters the first to catch him at the hotel lobby, Fariñas said for a few minutes before making his announcement, saying he was still waiting for "one last call from Beijing."

He said he was able to get hold of a Chinese official who relayed Ms Arroyo's decision to Fariñas. He said he received reassuring words from Chinese officials on Friday night.

Asked what assurance he got to the Chinese officials, Fariñas said: "No assurance is given in by Mr. Bo Xilai and I relayed it straight on our bilateral relations.

"I had to do a lot of back channeling quietly. Last night I received information from Beijing authorities that they will [give] continuing support and belief to President Arroyo. They would like to continue helping her government. They have acceded to, or agreed to, our calls for a suspension of the project."

Not as simple as that

Asked why the project was not just cancelled altogether, Fariñas said: "It's not as simple as canceling something viewed as strategically important to our bilateral relations. Even if the Chinese government which had offered to help the President... They believe in the leadership of the President.... They are the ones helping us, but we reconsider our own problem here."

Fariñas clarified the people who had "made trouble" for the NBN project.

He added: "The Chinese government has given this project a high consideration... This has been strategically important to our bilateral relations with China. In spite of all explanations, all the complaints, attacks, criticisms and controversies accompanying this broadband project, it was not as simple as a lot of people think it is.

"We probably need more time to [explain] the processes. In spite of all explanations, many issues still need clarifications, and I think it is the best thing to do, and the President gave me the instructions to suspend it."

Defensarkis said the suspension was prompted by the "many communications from different sectors."

He said that after reviewing the processes that led led to the awarding of the contract on ZTE, her office found that "the processes undertaken by Secretary Mendoza are ... abandoned."

'No coverup'

Ferrin and Defensarkis denied that the suspension was meant to cover up the controversy, or take the heat off the President's husband, or Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos, whom Jose de Venecia had accused of brokering the deal and attempting to bribe him.

Abalos has denied the allegations.

"I find it funny to even have that accusation," Ferrin said.

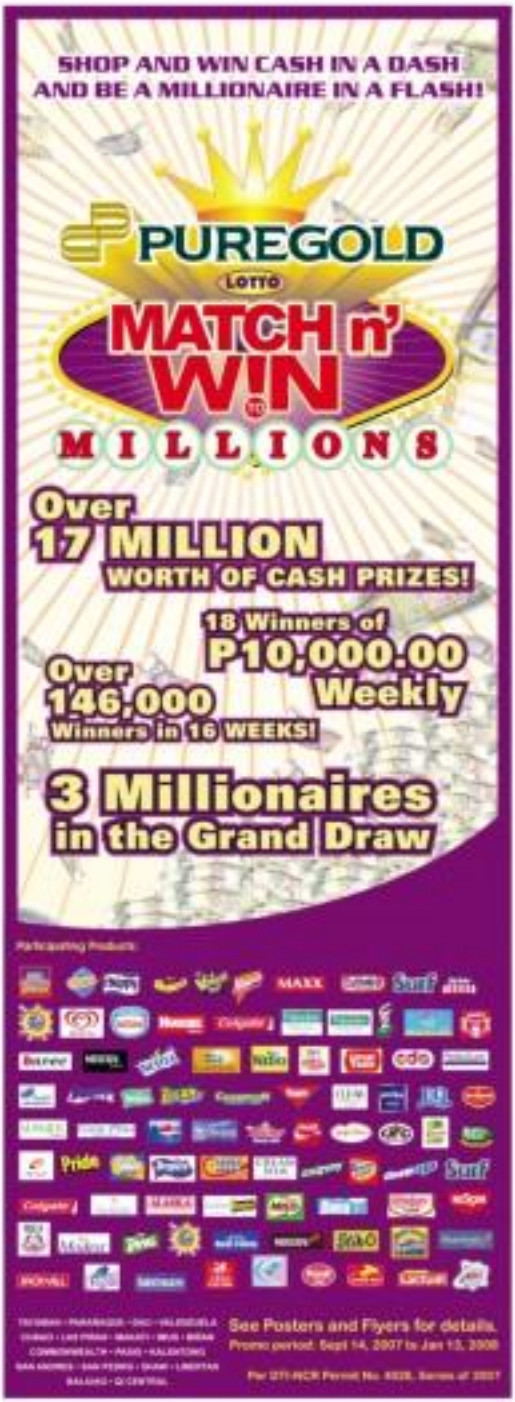
Said Defensarkis: "We already said many that just because the President made the decision to suspend, it is a coverup. It cannot be a coverup because we have all the instructions to withdraw these issues."

She also said there would be no coverup because the allegations of bribery had been brought before the Ombudsman. (Rep. Carlos Padilla filed a graft case against Mendoza and other officials involved in the deal.)

"As for constitutional officers, we have cleared that early that just because the allegations of bribery had been brought before the Ombudsman, [Rep. Carlos Padilla filed a graft case against Mendoza and other officials involved in the deal.]

INQUIRER Mindanao

The painter in the engineer



ONE OF the paintings of Edwin Jumalon, a 48x61 inch oil on canvas titled "Bad Highway."

By Benda M. Fernandez
Contributor

It is the pervading law of all things organic and inorganic...
That form ever follows function. This is the law."

THE PHRASE IS DISTILLED wisdom from the American architectural giant, Louis Sullivan, who developed the shape of the tall steel skyscraper in late 19th century. The credo flourished under Frank Lloyd Wright, who later became one of the world's most influential architects.

It is interesting to find this famous dictum echoed and defied in the title of Edwin Jumalon's latest art exhibit, "Form Follows Mine." It is equally interesting to note that Jumalon is an engineer who has supervised building projects before and who has decided to devote all of his time to visual art.

Opening on Sept. 8 at the Gallery of the Peninsula and the Archipelago, under the auspices of the Ateneo de Zamboanga University, the exhibit sheds light on the artist's creative preoccupations.

The works, like Jumalon's past forays in abstraction, reflect the handling of paint regardless of any conscious motive or purpose. The artist confesses as much: "I had no preconceived plans of the outcome, save to paint something. Listening solely on inspiration, there is the assurance that everything comes into place."

A lot of notable painters in history, among them Paul Klee, have taken this approach—that an artist cannot plan for work but must let it grow on its own. Jumalon's works begin with him relating lines, shapes, and colors to each other, adding a form that has "achieved prospects," pushing in shapes that "have been waiting in line."

Hearing the artist speak about the process, one gets the feeling that there really is some order in his chaos. The statement spoke of it as "divine madness." Jumalon speaks of it as "the tangling freedom of the artist's hand."

And what has that hand wrought?

Most of the paintings show indistinct forms enveloped by a riot of color. One comes to them like a traveler seeing a city emerging from the fog. In "Epicenter," one seems to be looking at an achingly familiar skyline, the tops of buildings denuded by a blanket of smoke and illuminated by moonlight.

In three of his works, titled "Mesh 1," "Mesh 2" and "Suspended Disbelief," one is peering through an enveloping haze at terraced buildings where light from the windows seeps through and hint at the artwork beyond. These works are composed of a series of overlapping and geodesic-like rectangular fields bathed in inner-sunlike colors.

In "Upper Mess," the fog is lifted, and windows shine brightly, and the architectural shapes gains more distinct. In "Tin City," one even seems to be gazing at order by city blocks from a bird's eye view; one frames seeing radio masts and cities somewhat cut by that "laughing hand."

In "Bad Highway" and "Prohibition," that hand seems to grow bolder and more playful, and one is taken out of any recognizable representation and thrust into a world of organic forms that hang and clash with one another like insects with pincers.

All these thoughts are grounded on the particular manner in which Jumalon struggles to coalesce these abstract images into concrete impressions. The completed artworks remain as tension-ridden visual works. Jumalon insists, not interested in resolving anything from the real world.

REVIEW

"Much like my previous abstract work, they are not intended to prove anything, nor in search for anything, Who said, 'Ideal work. Mind'?" (That would be Picasso, who further found obvious struggling ungainly to understand art by saying, 'Why society is understand the song of a bird?')

However devoid of any conscious purpose the artist might purport his works to be, one sees glimmers of what the unconscious might reveal. Through refining disparate shapes and colors, the artist seems to compose a study in humanity's past preoccupations with architecture, form and structure.

ANOTHER painting of Jumalon, a 48x48 inch oil on canvas titled "Twilight Memories" on exhibit.

The artist might not have had any preconceived notions of relative that order and color have, but he certainly recognizes previous work patterns and might be conceptual framework nevertheless. Thus, his sedimentary of what the works may hint at through the titles of his paintings and the exhibit itself.

About his years back with Frank Lloyd Wright's lessons saying, Jumalon tells this anecdote:

"I always prefer to make a straight line crooked—a perceptual instinct to my failing my drawing. I subject my freshmen engineering students, 500 families a good semester, just did what was to be done: tell the student who voluntarily rejects the campus and rules in favor of the more vehement freehand. It was from one such nervous nature that I first heard of Wright's lessons. Action Form follows function,' [the] stressed it to me more than [the rules 2+15."

"Form follows Mine" is for exhibit until Oct. 5. Gallery hours are from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. every Saturday. For inquiries, contact (082)344-0040 or (082)344-0077.

Across the NATION

Baguio Korean schools in hot water

BAGUIO CITY—SEVERAL KOREAN-RUN SCHOOLS here are in hot water for alleged violations of labor laws and for their owners' failure to comply with requirements to operate, an official of the Department of Labor and Employment in the Cordillera said.

Ind Bruno, DOLE regional director, told a city council session this week that of the 16 Korean-run language schools here, only 37 have been accredited by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda).

Distance wages

Bruno said her agency has requested 31 English language schools and discovered that seven of these were not paying their employees properly.

Bruno said these schools pay their English teachers only between P50 and P95 an hour, lower than the P60 an hour minimum wage for tutors.

She said many schools also ask their teachers to work beyond the standard four hours daily workload.

Bruno said aside from low wages, many violations of Korean-run schools involved their owners' failure to release the full 13th month pay of their employees and nonpayment of the Social Security System and Philhealth Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) premiums, among others.

Probe

She said school owners have been called to a hearing to discuss the problem. The DOLE, she said, has conducted three hearings since July.

Bruno, however, clarified that they could not order the closure of these schools because violations of labor laws are "not bases for closure."

"Compliance only is a term of 180 days ensure that these schools comply with the requirements," she said.

She said many of these foreign schools are only business permits to operate and have not been accredited by Tesda.

Felino Cuaga, Tesda director for Baguio and Benguet, said foreign schools are required to register with the Securities and Exchange Commission and get Tesda accreditation.

Openness

Many schools, Cuaga said, should also spell out their programs, reveal the names of their foreign partners and submit a copy of the curriculum and business permit, among others.

Virginia Akiate, a representative of the Commission on Higher Education, told the council that foreign schools operating in the country should also have a student population that is predominated by Filipinos.

"They should have more Filipino students than a third of the school population should be foreign students," she said. Dennis Bernardino, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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DURIAN SEASON RACHEL DIQUINZON INQUIRER

A man checks durian unloaded from a delivery truck in Davao City, cautioned to be flooded with the widely-fact delicacies that.

Malaysian execs see peace pact

COTABATO CITY—TWO MALAYSIAN OFFICIALS, including the new head of the International Monitoring Team (IMT), yesterday predicted that a final ceasefire agreement could be signed between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front this year.

Malaysian Army Brig. Gen. Yoon Ion Mat Daud formally replaced Brig. Gen. Ismail bin Ahmad Khan as IMT head on Friday.

"I am optimistic that a final peace agreement will be achieved before the year ends," Yoon said.

He said the atmosphere is now conducive for signing a peace deal because the executive agreement has been very effective.

"The time is ripe for both negotiating panels to come to a mutual agreement with finality. It's hope and pray," Yoon said during ceremonies marking his entry to the IMT. Charlie C. Señase and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

Bridge collapse injures 10 people

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—A concrete bridge in Sipalay City 178.4 km south of here, collapsed Friday, causing a truck to fall into the river.

Sipalay City Mayor Ireneo Montilla said the truck's 10 passengers suffered injuries.

Montilla said the bridge's collapse would cost about P30 million. Since the bridge was destroyed, Montilla said, travel to Binalbagan Negros would be more difficult.

Before the bridge collapsed, only light vehicles were allowed to use it due to its weight limit.

But Sanlorenzo Eng Trebles, who had leased the truck to deliver cargo to Hyatt Grande, said there was no notice placed before the bridge that trucks were not allowed to pass through the bridge.

Trebles claimed that trucks have been using the bridge.

Board votes in favor of mayors vs Panlilio

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO— The Pampanga Mayors' League has won the first round against Gov. Eddie Panlilio in the provincial board, with a 14-0 vote, approved on Friday to ordinance that gave mayors bigger regulatory powers over the governor's multimillion-peso quarry industry.

Backed by allies from Cebu City, Panlilio told the Inquirer he would "vote (Ordinance No. 172) to uphold possible veto power."

"Ipapatupad pa rin namin (We're going to), It is not totally lawful," said Panlilio. "He would take this all the way up to the court, if necessary."

Apart from giving mayors a bigger role in the quarry industry, the ordinance increased revenue shares for towns and villages and abolished the provincial capitol's P3.50 administrative fee for every truckload of sand hauled out of Pampanga.

Board Members Oscar Rodriguez, Carlos Garcia, Tarlac Hidlo, Candido Bagtas, Celeste Lazo, Arthur Sotelo, John David, Ricardo Ethan, Johnny Quiambao, Delsan Colaco and Nilo Cabalo approved the ordinance on its full text.

Vice Gov. Jennifer Cuneo did not cast a vote because of her being the board's presiding officer, Mr. and Panlilio has 15 days to act on the ordinance.

Prior to the board's voting, the PML submitted a resolution expressing "collective support" for the ordinance. Dated Sept. 18, it was signed by mayors of seven mid-rich towns and 13 mayors of towns whose shares are in quarry activities.

The resolution came 22 days after Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, PML president, submitted the draft of the measure to the board on Aug 29.

Panlilio did not give his reaction to the approval of the ordinance when asked through PML secretary Bobby Blanco.

The board voted after reading the position paper of the allied six Bulacan and Pampanga associations of Non-Governmental Organizations, which submitted its recommendations on the issue.

Antonio Ayson, a quarry operator, said the board "did not have much time consulting with the group," referring to the quarry industry that he called the "goose that lays the golden eggs."

Quarry collections as of Sept. 20 have reached P66.22 million, a capitol report showed. The amount is more than double the P28.1 million the administration of Former Governor Mark Lapid had collected in 2006. Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

NORTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY

TRAFFIC ADVISORY

By tomorrow, September 24, Monday, there will be substantial improvement in traffic in the Southbound Valenzuela-Balintawak section of the NLEX.

The on-going roadworks in that section will be completed on or before September 28 when ALL southbound lanes will be opened to traffic.

We apologize for all the inconvenience the roadworks have caused. As we resume normal southbound operations, we assure you of our continued delivery of high quality services.

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NEWS

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Beetles, rooster make reading fun at Inquirer

A BEETLE, A ROOSTER AND A GIRL WITH incredible hair were just some of the characters the audience met yesterday during the tenth Inquirer Read-Along session.

The session featured Daniel Moore, energy and environment chief of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ms. Philippines-Earth 2007 Jessica Hatta, 7-year-old Mar Jao Cachil Dalupan and returning Albaying storyteller Rich Rodriguez.

Hatta, together with history professor Krystal Ann Dizon (Miss Philippines-Air), Sarah Kristin Hilbun (Miss Philippines-Fire) and Rose Ritchie Bautista (Miss Philippines-Sea Tourism), led the audience in a song and dance number about taking care of the environment.

Moore, a coleopterist (someone who studies the life cycles, behavior, ecology and diversity of beetles), was joined by them in reading "Mr. Beetle's Many Rooms" by Sulwe Magnuson.

Moore told his audience, made up of some 75 children and their parents, that he loved to read, especially about bugs.

"Reading stimulates the mind and encourages people to go explore things in life. You get a lot of ideas from reading, but in the end of the day you cannot stay with pure mere mark in the book. You have to take what you read and apply it to real world experiences," he said.

Then Moore brought out his beetle collection, which delighted the children.

The collection included a tiny dung beetle, "the biggest beetle in the world," he said, adding that he found the insects in Africa when he worked for 13 years.

For connecting completely different things in life, Dan got a lot of ideas from reading, but in the end of the day you cannot stay with pure mere mark in the book. You have to take what you read and apply it to real

For connecting completely different things in life, Dan got a lot of ideas from reading, but in the end of the day you cannot stay with pure mere mark in the book. You have to take what you read and apply it to real

Afonsowen's "Ang Makiyang Manok."

Dalupan, a division winner in "Pagkukuwento sa Filipino," a storytelling contest in Pasig, has been reading since he was 4.

Alongside everyone Rich Rodriguez read two stories: "Ang Naiddismang Buhok at Kanyad" by Dr. Luis Gatmaitan and "Billy Goats Gruff."

The children were given free copies of the comic book, "Hari ng Kalinaw."

Sponsors of yesterday's session were Krispy Kreme, Scholastic Books, Hands on Manila, Soroptimist International of Eastwood City and Dipan-Aquino of Library Hub in Pasig.

The next Inquirer Read-Along session will be on Oct. 13 at the Inquirer office in Makati and on Oct. 20 at Pastoral Book Store at Shangri-La Mall in Mandaluyong. Interested participants may contact Ellen Caperiz at 6396 8080 at 897-8808, local 329. Their are on a first-come, first-served basis. Sebastiá Quindala, *Inquirer Research*

SMART Infinity unveils high-end privilege card

Leading wireless services provider Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART) and its sister premium brand, SMART Infinity, recently unveiled the Infinity Privilege Card as a special treat for all subscribers of the exclusive postpaid brand.

The Infinity Privilege Card is positioned to provide perks to affluent individuals who, armed with cash and with plenty of plastic, have become blasé with the usual privileges that come with every other card of such kind, and have begun looking for that one card that provides exceptional experience unmatched by any other.

With this particular selection of clients in mind, SMART Infinity has partnered with unique fine dining restaurants, for-once exclusive hotels and resorts in the prime tourist spots in the country, and specialty luxury stores to offer to subscribers exceptionally generous perks, only through the Infinity Privilege Card.

"With the unveiling of the Infinity Privilege Card, we raise the bar higher in terms of providing first-class perks to our valued customers," said Danilo Medes, head of SMART's Wireless Consumer Division. "This demonstrates our commitment to maintain reward and value programs that meet our customers' needs and tastes."

To complement the Infinity Privilege Card, SMART partnered with Banco de Oro (BDO), one of the leading full service banks in the Philippines, to offer exclusively to SMART Infinity subscribers the new SMART Infinity-BDO Platinum MasterCard®.

The exclusive Platinum Card program empowers SMART Infinity subscribers with a financial tool that matches their needs and lifestyles. It represents the fusion of the best offered by SMART, BDO, and MasterCard – all leaders in their respective fields.

At the launch of the premium lifestyle cards of SMART Infinity, many lucky guests were treated to the finest gifts as a prelude to perks that await them through the card. Grand giveaway weekends at the Taal Vista Hotel in Tagaytay, the Regents Country Club, Manil Bayana Boracay, Plantation Bay Resort in Cebu, and Pearl Farm in Davao were up for grabs. Exclusive spas like The Farm at San Benito, Utopia Spa, and Serenity Hilot 4758 gave away gift certificates entitling SMART Infinity subscribers to special spa therapy sessions.

The Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Discovery Suites, and The Bellevue Manila generously gave away exciting prizes to lucky subscribers. Lovely dinners and coffee dates also await SMART Infinity subscribers at Outback Restaurant, Ultra Ribs Cafe, and at Pigeon.

Beauty products and treatments courtesy of Beauté's and Exceptionals Salon were stuffed off card giveaways from were given away by Promenades and Powerhouse. Lastly, the evening's grandest prizes were a brand new Nissan 350 and Infinity ring and cufflinks from Rustic Jewels.

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Reviving the tertulia: A night of song and 100 fingers on the keyboard

THE YOUNGEST performer in the group is Lorenzo Torres, aged 7. He has been playing since he was 4 years old.

By Allison W. Lopez

LONG BEFORE TELEVISION ARTS OR karaoke machines were invented, entertainment for some Filipinos, particularly among well-to-do families, meant gathering around the piano and singing or playing stirring tunes.

In fact, toward the end of the 19th century, until the start of World War II, "tertulias"—an unknown subtle service and lovers of art and culture would regale one another with music or poetry—were common in mansions in Intramuros.

So part of its 100th year celebration, the School of Music of St. Scholastica's College will hold a tertulia on Oct. 7 featuring young talents, several pianists aged 7 to 87.

Members of the faculty and alumnae will also participate in the one-and-a-half hour concert which pays tribute to the founder of the School of Music, German nun Sr. Baptista Battig.

"Our founder came to the Philippines right about this period and so we thought it fitting that we should celebrate her musical life with an adaptation of the tertulia in a modern setting," said Sr. Mary Placid, the school dean.

"[We'd] love to bring back those days ... It's going to be a modern tertulia, as instead of discussions that also used to come with it, it's going to be a musical bout," added SSC president, Sr. Angelica Lorenzo.

Although Battig naturally leaned toward European compositions, Lorenzo said the nun also exposed to her students the importance of enriching one's own music.

"Ish these Western and Filipino composition for the 1st baby because Sister Battig said, 'I would like the children of the East to play as well as the children of the West. But I also want them to integrate based on the techniques from Western music,'" she added.

Faculty member Camille Lopez Molina will begin the concert by singing two songs composed by German musicians admired by Battig: "Widmung (Dedication)" by Robert Schumann and "The Erlking" by Franz Schubert.

Molina will be accompanied on the piano by Greg Zuniga, another member of the faculty, in telling the dramatic legend often recounted by Battig to her students.

But unlike regular concerts, the modern-day tertulia will have the pianists walking off and on the stage, eliminating the inactive intervals.

To recreate the cozy setting of those pre-WWII social gatherings, Bro. piano will be set up on the stage of the school's St. Cecilia's Hall, along with classical musical furniture that performers can sit on while waiting for their cue.

Among the featured pianists are Lorenzo Torres, a 7-year-old boy and his music teacher, Mae de Vera. They will play "Variations of a Nursery Rhyme, op. 25" (twinkle, twinkle little star) together, while Torres will play several pieces, including 87-year-old Cora Manes.

Torres has been playing since he was 4 while Manes has been passing on her piano-playing techniques to students since she graduated from SSC in 1940.

Seated beside each other during a recent practice session, the two showed spontaneous love music and little pats between piano strokes.

"So you grow older it gets harder, and you get nervous because sometimes, your fingers get stiff," admitted Manes, laughing.

Still, she showed great zeal and form as she hit the keys beside Torres who was beaming as he played "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

Not to be outdone, 10 more led by Placid, Lovino, Mother Princess Sr. Mary John Mountain and Sr. Ma Lourdes, former princess, will perform "Filipiniana II."

Next, a hundred fingers, or 10 pianists composed of faculty members and alumnae, will be playing to duet or alternate Filipino folk songs like "Kundiman," "Ahay Balitaw," and "Pandanggoluan."

Pianist and stage director Orella Reza said there was an added degree of difficulty when people play the piano simultaneously.

"You need to know the piece well and the parts to be played by the others as well. The

AMONG those who will perform is 87-year-old Cora Manes who graduated from the School of Music in 1940.

Pianists pay tribute to St. Scho School of Music founder, Sr. Baptista Battig, in a concert on Oct. 7

important thing is you must listen," she explained.

Other performers are members of the SSC Chamber Orchestra who will sing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus."

In honor of Battig, who headed the School of Music for more than 30 years before her death in 1992, Grace Alfeta Gerbaldan will perform Maurice Ravel's "Pavane for a Dead Princess" with cello-ist Miguel-ito Gerry Graham Gonzales.

Battig said the tertulia may be distant memories for now, but Scholastrans will surely live and breathe music for generations to come.

THE SISTERS of St. Scholastica's College hold their own beside the more experienced pianists during a rehearsal.

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Marine biologist keeps 'little trees,' not coral reefs, in backyard nursery

By Julie M. Aurelio

DURING OFFICE HOURS, THE tall, bearded professor of marine biology spends most of his time studying coral reefs and giant clams.

In his spare time, however, Dr. Edgardo Gomez plays "forest father" to thousands of baby trees he grows in pots and plastic bags in his backyard.

"I don't really keep track of them. I've probably grown them in stands," said the 68-year-old professor.

But his trees of choice are not the common acacia or ipil-ipil, which, according to Gomez, are not even endemic to the country.

He clarified that most species commonly considered as homegrown are, in fact, exotic and came from South America or mainland Asia. These include the acacia, ipil-ipil, Indian, lanete, mahogany (Swietina and mastilyasia).

His backyard in Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City measures 40 sq m and is home to 100 or so baby trees. Ironically, there is only one full grown tree—a mayapis—on his property.

Gomez said he looks after warm, upbeat, fun, mediator, multitasks, and calm(ing) trees.

"This advocacy of mine started as just a part time. Planning native trees is my hobby, the way other people have their stress busters," he told the Inquirer.

Asked how long it takes for a seed to bloom and become a "little tree," Gomez said it depends on the species and the quality of the soil and water used during the planting process.

When his trees mature, they are replanted on the sprawling University of the Philippines campus in Diliman City, where he served for nearly 25 years as founding director of the Marine Science Institute (MSI).

Most of his "babies" can be found at the College of Science complex, bounded by C.P. Garcia and A. Bonifacio Avenues. Ironically, the campus is mostly populated with exotic trees and not with native species, he pointed out.

"Our economy is sick in flora. But we know more about exotic species than our own native varieties. Is it because those are easier to grow?" Gomez asked.

He began planting native trees in 1987 on the Diliman campus, believing that it was his logical to fill the Rainbow Garden with native, not exotic trees. Some of his babies have grown nearly 100 feet tall. Gomez hastened to add with a chuckle, "But if I ask them to cut down the mature, they will kill me."

Gomez is only able to care for trees in his spare time as he is still actively conducting research on coral reefs and invertebrate reproduction at the MSI.

He called himself "an upper-tentacle gardener" who plants whatever seeds he can get his hands on.

Gomez gets his seeds from friends who stumble upon amazing finds, or from trips to different places in the country. He then plants them in pots, cans or even plastic bags in his backyard.

"There sometimes pick up my fantasy of the many seedlings in our garden. He even asked me to name one scion of them," he confessed, referring to his wife, a former ambassador to Indonesia.

Gomez cited his penchant for growing native trees ever since while growing up in a farm in Ingeles City, Pampanga.

Belonging to a landed family, Gomez spent his childhood in a four-hectare farm where he trained tentatives as a child. His mother, Pacita, loved plants and had her own garden.

But when Japanese forces occupied the country, the Gomezes moved to an apartment building in Pasay City owned by his father.

"I'm really the son of a farmer," he said in jest, adding that growing up in a farm "made me love nature and trees."

When the marine biologist got his own apartment, also in his father's building, he began planting native trees in small pots on his verandah. Gomez moved to Ayala Alabang eight years ago and has continued growing trees in his backyard.

Gomez also gives away seedlings to friends and to schools such as the Holy Angel University in Pampanga and Cebu Doctors University.

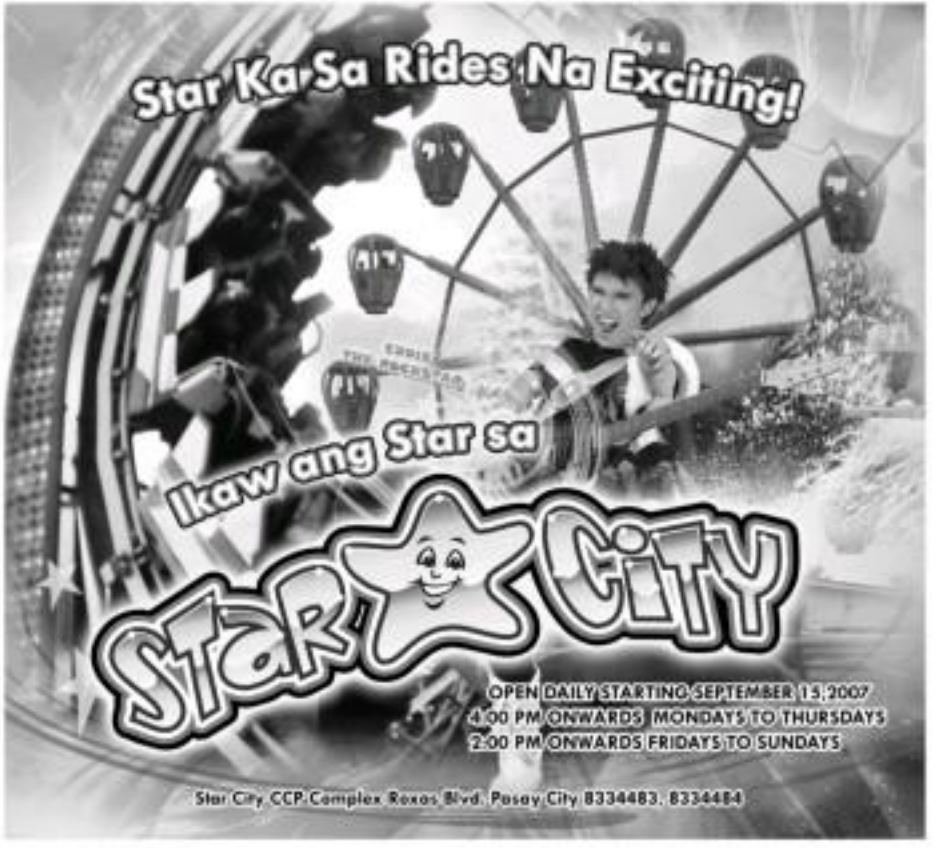
"Trees give me pleasure and enjoyment. I don't plant them for myself but for others," he said, adding that it costs him less than P100 to buy soil and plastic bags for the seeds.

Gomez has thought of selling his little trees, but he said his day job at the MSI already pays for the bills and much more.

And like dedicated professors, "I do it for the love of it. You can do a lot with as little. All it takes is perseverance, determination and hope."

OH, EDGARDO Gomez views one of his "babies"—the seed of the uplifting tree.

THE PROFESSOR examines the leaves of the Bolabat tree while/near a cherry trunk. The tree got its name from the municipality of Malabalan in Pampanga.



GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

Love in a time of martial law

By Philip C. Tubeza
Correspondent

HONG KONG—She was pregnant and on the run from military agents hunting her down. He was in a military stockade struggling to get letters to candy wrappers in the hope that those would reach her.

For their student activism leaders and Alex Aquino, the onset of martial law was a crucible that molded their young lives together as they desperately kept alive underground the fight against the Marcos dictatorship while trying to eke out a life for their family in Manila.

Alex would be arrested twice by the military while nursing their first child, and Edna, the first to look into the plight of the growing number of Filipino migrants leaving the country.

Edna received an award from Queen Elizabeth II in 2003 for her contribution to empowering Filipino migrants in London.

But it's the memories of martial law that remains most vivid for the couple, now based in Hong Kong. Particularly for Edna, those dark days would always remind her of the night she hugged her husband while lying on the sun.

Anniversary

"Martial law helped me get my husband," Edna said, adding that she considered its onset an their anniversary. (The declaration of martial law was officially announced on Sept. 23, 1972. But President Ferdinand Marcos signed the declaration Sept. 21, 1972.)

It was when we formalized (our affair) that we would like to live as a couple. That is why we celebrate our anniversary during martial law," she said.

A distant relative of former President Corazon Aquino (or the Cojuangco clan, to be precise), Alex was then being hunted down by the military for being one of the leading activists of the Kabataang Makabayan, a radical leftist youth organization.

He was a former president of the Ateneo de Manila University student council and headed the Student Alliance for National Democracy, a coalition of different student councils across the country.

Edna had joined the Communist Party of the Philippines a few months before Ferdinand Marcos declared martial rule on Sept. 21, 1972.

"I don't want to be misinterpreted that I'm trying to trivialize what happened. What happened to activists like us was really full of drama. There were so many sad stories of course but there were also stories that, looking back, would make us smile," she said.

"Those stories should one day be written. It's not just sad stories. We grew up also in the midst of making mistakes."

It happened on 3rd night

Alex and Edna had known each other for a year when martial law was declared, which when it came, she got lucky since they were the ones picked off as leading activists went underground.

"It was the third night of martial law and we were sleeping in the house of a fellow activist. He was minding what was happening. He called a Manila [national] [station] and [the] International [station]," Edna said.

"Nothing was happening. So we slept. Alex was nagsabihan niya siguro [Alex's classmate] na ako. 'Mahirap na nga iyan.' Tapos nagpaiwan na iyan [sic, Ayun]," she said.

Edna added: "So a few weeks after, we were married but in a very discreet way—somebody died because in the movement then, you had to go through the process of informing the collectives, but for us, [was] [sic] Army."

Edna had fallen for Alex when they became close friends during those lively days of student activism.

"He was my crush but I did not know if he also liked me," she said.

But they never got married in church. They later obtained a marriage certificate so that Edna could use Alex's surname to avoid detention as they were through a dangerous cat and mouse game with military agents in the dark alleys and side streets of Manila.

At first, they hid in the houses of friends, relatives, or acquaintances but this later proved to be untenable since their presence posed a danger to their benefactors after a few months on the run, the activists decided to rent apartments and rent them into "DO" or underground houses.

And since it was martial law, communication between the different cells of the underground was severely restricted.

"Sometimes we ended up (unknowingly) renting squatters and shuttles away from each other, and we would later find out that we had the same landlord," Edna said.

Secret letters

They had to be prepared to jump out of the window at any given moment due to the threat of a raid by the military.

"You could see sleep in your sleepwear or in your street clothes because in the movement then, you had to go through the process of informing the collectives, but for us, [was] [sic] Army."

And during Christmas time, they were so sad because they could not visit their families.

And it became more of a challenge for Edna when Alex was arrested in January 1973 after the military raided a house where he was hiding. Afterwards, Edna learned she was pregnant.

"I convinced with my life in the underground but it was so difficult because we had to conceal," she said.

She later took courage and contacted his mother and asked her if she could carry her letter to Alex who was detained in Fort Bonifacio. "It was hidden inside a candy wrapper. His reply came in a cigarette pack. Alam mo yung silver na pula't pula? Doon ang sustenansya niya. Maliwanag pa sa sikat ng araw ang sulat niya. Sabi niya, 'Kung ano man ang mangyari, ipagpatuloy mo ang pagmamahal mo sa bayan.'"

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Normal lives

"Minister Enrile told me, 'Sa, what's the case?' and he asked why (Alex) was arrested. Enrile, 'Sir, we should know because you signed [the (arrest) order],'" Edna said.

"Nag tanong kung ba na noon (Sue) you know sigh then he signed [Alex's] release?"

Edna and Alex tried to live normal lives and raise a family after their release in 1975. He worked for the Cojuangco while Edna joined the Nutrition Center of the Philippines, ironically a project of then First Lady Imelda Marcos. But then their comrades from the underground contacted them, and before they knew it, they were again deeply involved in the struggle against the dictatorship.

"I was building solidarity networks and then we also began looking at migrant workers. I was one of those who started the thinking on how to organize the workers abroad," Edna said.

But by then, Admiss within the party began to mature about what to do with the democratic space opened up by the fall of Marcos. Edna became demoralized as she began having second thoughts about the direction with the party line.

Queen's award

Her demoralization came to a head after the military arrested her in June 1990 in Makati on charges that she and Alex were behind the kidnapping of soldiers in Quezon province which happened when they were out of the country. Alex was then abroad when Edna was arrested.

While in jail, she learned about a job opening in ministry International in London and so she applied for it.

"I had three children: reading in grade school. So I applied for my job hoping that. To me the story short, I made it and with the aid [any that I will apply for ministry," Edna said.

"The I tried to take control of my life and be ready to face the consequences. And those as topics."

After leaving the Philippines, Edna worked to set up the advocacy campaign leading to Step Up Against Women Campaign, while Alex is now in the restaurant business. They are their view with the CPP line continued in their advocacies, focusing on their fellow migrant workers.

"Our interior for the country is not just about the party or movement. We were doing it for the people," Edna said.

"We set up the committee that became a role model in London for its good work to the extent that it got the Queen's award in 2003 and then a year after that we got a similar award from Malacañang. So many blessings."

The Centre for Filipinos was awarded Queen's Awards for Voluntary Service by groups in the community on the 50th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's coronation.

Edna and Alex said they owe the blessings they had in the underground, adding that they continue to be grateful to the party for the "privilege" of being part of the struggle against the dictatorship.

Still activists

Said Alex: "It forged every door me among people of the same persuasion. You lived through life and death situations and so you have the same intensities."

Said Edna: "I'm very thankful to the party and the people who have molded me during the way. I'll never, never, turn my back on that that you grow and I remain. I have outgrown to be party."

"Now, we are activists in our own persons and still committed to social change and genuine social change and to social justice. We don't have any organizational affiliation or loyalty but can be but dreamers. As long as you are honest, true and confident in yourself, that's what is important."

'GMA supported communist movement, but hated Joma'

By Philip Tubeza
Correspondent

HONG KONG—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo might now be planning an all-out war to crush the New People's Army but during the martial law years until the early 1980s she was one of its active supporters.

So claim was the collaborator that she was once very interested in formally join the National Democratic Front.

According to Alex and Edna Aquino, former members of the communist underground, Ms Arroyo, then a budding economics professor, "took risks" and actively supported the Left as part of the broad coalition against the Marcos dictatorship.

Extremely devoted

But she declined to formally join the communists because Jose Ma. Sison, declaring their Party of the Philippines, had branded her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, as an American puppet.

The father was contained in the book Philippine Society and Revolution, purportedly authored by Sison.

"She was part of the network of the underground," Edna said. "And one point, we approached her if she could formally join the NDF."

"(Gloria) said that she will only be open to our discussion on that if that labeling of her father's regime or administration would be removed," she added.

Edna said that Ms Arroyo became an anti-Marcos personality at that time because of her father. "She was extremely devoted to her father," she said.

Former Sen. Marcos defeated Ms Arroyo's father in his bid to get reelected in the 1965 presidential elections.

"Gloria was so angry about that labeling of her father because of that," Edna said.

"She was very, very much emotionally indicated into the NDF since the party of course would not revise the dire influential treaties of its founding chair.

Nevertheless, the young lawyer continued to support the Left, according to Edna. Alex added that she also helped produce position papers about the country's economic situation and how the economic model pushed Marcos should be at that time.

Simple, generous

"Something else consistently like was a very good ally of the Left because it's not only [sic] most as part of the anti-Marcos movement right after martial law until, if I can recall, until probably Ninoy's time," Edna said.

"She was one of those who took risks. We would have open and down discussions with her."

Edna said the latter Diosdado then was "a very simple, generous" individual.

"We become friends, with lots of mutual respect for each other," Edna said.

Edna said she stood side-by-side Ms Arroyo's anti-Marcos record whenever others, particularly those associated with former President Corazon Aquino, would dismiss it.

"I would tell them 'Look, she was part of the anti-Marcos group (how' (but) they would vehemently deny it. I would say 'Come on. GMA was part of it.' Why deny her role?" she said.

"They were even dumping (Sin) she marched with us on Ayala (Avenue) but I saw her. We were marching together in Ayala. Maybe not every Friday but I don't exactly see her," she added.

Edna said the attitude of some blue-blooded activists at that time was in part caused by her identification with the Left.

Close to China

"(It's) either 'You're one of us or you're not one of us.' If the activist any association at UBM noon. She was more on our side than on the side of the conservatives (the Spanish-speaking ones). Interesting to [see] Nancy Binay and Ramos," Edna said.

Edna and Alex also remember Ms Arroyo being part of an effort facilitated by the Left to establish "people to people relations" with communist China as early as 1973.

"Very special friends ala ng China, which needed all the friends it could get to boost its diplomatic ties abroad, particularly in the Philippines, they went as a strong ally of the US," Alex said.

Abuses

"Kaya a ilovia ngayon to pakalapit siyem sa China kasi hindi nakakalimutan ng China na noong panahon na hindi sila popular siyang presidente na si, at the risk of square of her career, hindi pa siguro her life, was already supporting them."

But Edna and Alex are also critical of the liberal human rights record of the Arroyo administration, particularly with the severe spate of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances of leftists.

"GMA as President is not the GMA whom I consider my friend. She is the head of state and the state is responsible for all of those," Edna said.

"At hindi lang yung killings. There are many missing persons. I'm equally critical of the bulto (sacks) sign scandal."

Edna said she would have no qualms about telling Ms Arroyo what she thought about those abuses if they got in most again.

"Sun she as Gloria who is my friend of (how years) when we were in the anti-Marcos front, we will always cherish those memories. Why will she be deprived of that acknowledgment of her contribution as an individual?" she said.

"On the other hand, with all those inconsistency issues between the Arroyo presidency and the Marcoses—she can't blame people and even friends in her previous life to question the moral standards that she fought for during that time," Edna said.

"Ultimately, that's really history but I see her continuous. It's a chapter in her own personal journey. Only history and God will judge."

The WORLD

Edna Lawrence B. Olonan

MONKS march during a protest against the government in Rangoon on Sept. 21.

26 nations urge rapid deployment of UN peace force to Darfur

UNITED NATIONS—A MEETING OF LEADERS FROM 26 nations called Friday for the rapid deployment to Darfur of the 26,000-member African Union-UN peacekeeping force approved by the Security Council and the participation of all rebel groups in peace talks scheduled for next month.

"If they are really leaders and think about the future of Sudan, they should go to the dialogue table," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said. The talks are to be in Tripoli, Libya, and some of the groups fighting the Khartoum government have expressed reservations about attending.

Alpha Oumar Konare, chair of the African Union, said the groups would have "full guarantees" that their views would be heard. "It is not acceptable that those that claim to be fighting for their peoples refuse to come to the negotiating table," he said.

The participants also witnessed a dispute over the composition of the force that Sudan was insisting must be all-African but others were saying must have some non-African elements if it were to meet UN standards.

"We don't need them," Lam Akol, Sudan's foreign minister, said when asked about troops offered by Thailand and Uruguay countries that traditionally supply trained peacekeepers for UN missions. "There are enough African troops," he added, saying that Africans had already promised almost twice the number needed.

John D. Negroponte, the US deputy secretary of state said, "Sudan has nothing to be afraid of." From the conclusion of non-African troops, Zagreb that the Khartoum government should stop its "foot-dragging," he noted that 18 months after the signing of an original peace agreement for Darfur, "we are still just in the initial phase."

Lord Malloch-Brown, the former deputy secretary general who is now Britain's minister of state for Africa, Asia and the United Nations, suggested the matter should be removed from the political sphere and settled on a "technical" basis based on the specialized needs of the force.

A CHINESE soldier from an engineering unit practices at an army camp in Qinyang in Henan province on Sept. 15. The soldier is a part of a 315-member multifunctional unit that will go for a United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Darfur region of Sudan in the near future.

Sun said, "This issue should not be viewed as some difference on political terms." He said it would be "resolved through technical discussions." AFP

1,500 monks hold protest march in Burma capital

RANGOON—AT LEAST 1,000 PEOPLE led by Buddhist monks marched along flooded streets in this capital on Friday, piling pressure on the ruling junta in Burma (also known as Myanmar) in the most sustained challenge to its rule in nearly 20 years.

About 1,500 maroon-robed monks marched barefoot through the city, attracting an equal number of followers who left the sidewalks to driving rain to wade through sometimes knee-deep water and chant prayers calling for peace.

Hundreds more people clapped from the sidewalks and from open windows along the route as the procession passed by.

The protests that began on Aug. 19 have turned into the most prolonged show of defiance in nearly 20 years against the military, which has ruled this impoverished, resource-rich country since 1962.

The latest protest began with about 300 Buddhist monks walking in the Shwedagon Pagoda, the city's most important landmark, witnesses said.

As they continued their march into downtown, the number of monks swelled to 1,500 with another 1,500 supporters joining them, about 100 security forces and civilian chain-in protect the monks, who carried multicolored religious flags.

They stopped outside the Sangaon (Sangan) city hall, where they chanted prayers, evening: "Peace and security will prevail. The people will never be harmed."

Monks have protested against the regime all week, overwhelming antijunta rallies that erupted a month ago amid public anger over a massive hike in fuel prices, which has left many unable to afford bus fare to get to work.

"Monks are taking to the streets in order to make the government listen and understand people's suffering," said Aung Naing Oo, a Thailand-based Burma analyst.

Some monks have refused to accept donations from members of the military, a gesture seen as a severe rebuke reminiscent to excommunication by Buddhists, who believe that giving alms daily is an important religious duty.

More than 250 people, including some of the nation's most prominent pro-democracy leaders, have been arrested since the protests began last month.

Burma's pro-democracy movement has long demanded reforms from the regime and freedom for Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who has spent most of the last 18 years under house arrest. AFP

US says 1 million Chinese-made cribs recalled after infants' deaths

WASHINGTON—SIMPLICITY INC., a supplier of baby furniture to Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and other big retailers, is recalling about one million Chinese-made baby cribs that have been linked to at least two infant deaths, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission said on Friday.

The drop-side can detach from the crib, which can create a dangerous gap that leads to an infant being trapped and suffocated, the safety agency said in announcing its urged parents to check all Simplicity-made cribs to ensure the drop-side is installed correctly.

The cribs, priced between $180 and $300, were sold by US retailers and chains, including Target Corp's website, Big Lots Inc. and family-owned Meijer Inc.

"The drop-side failures result from both the hardware and crib design, which allow consumers to unintentionally install the drop-side upside down," the safety commission said. "This, in turn, can weaken the hardware and cause the drop-side to detach from the crib. When the drop-side detaches, it creates a gap in which infants can become entrapped."

Two separate infant deaths involving a 9-month-old and a 6-month-old occurred when cribs with slider-style hardware had the drop-side installed upside down, the agency said.

The CPSC said it was also investigating a third death that had newer-style hardware. The agency has received reports of seven infant entrapments involving the recalled products.

"CPSC is also aware of two incidents that occurred when the drop-side was correctly installed with older style hardware, though the upside down installation greatly increases the risk of failure," the agency said.

Although the cribs were made in China, the safety agency downplayed that aspect of the massive recall.

"This recall isn't a China-made problem. It's more about hardware and crib design and less about it being assembled in China," a CPSC spokesperson said.

China has been in the spotlight for a series of recent recalls involving products ranging from lead-painted toys to tainted toothpaste and pet food. Reuters

Fujimori loses extradition battle, to be sent to Peru

SANTIAGO—FORMER PERUVIAN President Alberto Fujimori lost his battle against extradition from Chile on Friday and was due to be taken to Lima to face charges of human rights abuses and corruption.

The man famed for crushing Maoist rebel group, the Shining Path, during his 1990-2000 rule was expected to be taken from his temporary residence on the outskirts of the Chilean capital Santiago to the city's airport on Friday evening.

From there, Chilean police said he would be flown to the border with Peru where he would be handed to Peruvian authorities, hours after Chile's Supreme Court sealed his fate by rejecting his extradition.

The 69-year-old is being forced deportation from Chile some nearly two years after he arrived unexpectedly in Santiago from Japan aiming to make a political comeback in Peru. The son of Japanese immigrants, Fujimori had spent five years in exile in Japan following the collapse of his government in 2000.

In his own years under arrest in Chile, he has fought a constant legal battle to avoid extradition to the country he once ruled.

That battle ended on Friday when Chile's Supreme Court ruled in favor of Peruvian prosecutors. The decision, which cannot be appealed, was a surprise and contradicted an earlier ruling by one of the court's own judges.

The court unanimously accepted evidence linking Fujimori to two notorious massacres—known as Barrios Altos and La Cantuta—in the early 2000s, when there was no war with the Shining Path.

Students, a professor and a child were among the 25 killed in the massacres, which Peruvian state prosecutors blame on death squads run by Fujimori's government.

"The word was much easier than we thought and the important thing above all was that Barrios Altos and La Cantuta," said Alberto Chaigneau, one of the judges who heard the case.

In an interview after the ruling, Fujimori said he would insist his name in Lima and insisted his tough actions had been necessary to rid Peru of Latin America's bloodiest insurgents. Reuters

FUJIMORI

2 students shot in US campus row

DOVER, DEL.—THE CAMPUS OF Delaware State University was locked down Friday after two freshman students were shot and wounded, one seriously, when an argument that had begun at a university cafeteria continued on the street, the police said.

The two suspects in the shooting were also students, the police said. One man is in custody for questioning, and the other one being sought Friday night. Neither was identified publicly.

University officials responded quickly to the shootings, which occurred shortly before 1 a.m. near Memorial Hall, a complex that includes the gymnasium and athletics department offices.

Officials ordered students of the emergency within 15 minutes and locked down most buildings. Within two hours, students and administrators said, officials at the 352-hectare campus about 113 km east of Washington, had posted flyers at dorms and a message on the campus website. They also telephoned campus residents to make sure "residents and relatives knew what was going on and to tell them that classes were canceled Friday.

The police said they are not long before the shooting, a group of eight to 10 students left the cafeteria after an argument. When they encountered one another again at a nearby corner, one of them pulled out a gun and began firing.

Shakita Middleton, 17-year-old from Washington, was shot twice in the torso, and Nathaniel Pew, 17, of Hamburg, Ton, was shot once in the ankle, officials in the District of Columbia mayor's office said. AFP

Castro reappears to quash rumors about his demise

HAVANA—CUBAN LEADER FIDEL Castro appeared in his first television interview in more than three months on Friday, ending speculation that the ailing revolutionary had died or suffered a cardiac relapse.

Castro, 81, spoke slowly about world affairs, the Cold War and the global economy, but appeared little changed from the last time he was shown in a state television interview on June 3.

"Here I am," Castro said, rebuffing those who have speculated that he was in dire health's door, already dead or about to die.

Dressed in what has become a customary red, blue and white athletic jacket, sitting in an armchair and shouting his ego through the gray in his beard and bags under his eyes, Castro answered questions about an essay he published this week and watched the United States, his longtime ideological foe.

"Yesterday the euro was at $1.41 .00, I think, about $84 a barrel," Castro said at one point, indicating that he was up to date on current affairs and signaling that the interview was very recent.

He also held up a copy of a book by former US Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan, "The Age of Turbulence: Adventures in a New World," which was published this week, and read excerpts in Spanish from the dust jacket.

Castro, who took power on the Caribbean island in a 1959 revolution, handed over control to his younger brother, Raul Castro, on July 31, 2006, after undergoing intestinal surgery. He has not appeared in public since then.

Instead, he has been seen in occasional photographs and videos with visiting foreign leaders and has published

FIDEL JUST QUITE ALIVE: Cuba leader Fidel Castro on Sept. 21.

a steady stream of columns and essays in state media over the past six months.

His failure to appear on his birthday on Aug. 13 fueled rampant rumors in Miami—the homeland of exiled opposition to his nearly five-decade-long rule—that Castro had had a major health setback, was on his deathbed or was already dead.

The interview aroused Cubans, 70 percent of whom had known no other leader before Castro fell sick last year. Reuters

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Barrera knocked out? /A23

Sunday SPORTS

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RP netters off to a blazing start

Near Group 1 stint after taking 2-0 lead vs Kuwaitis; 'toxic food' downs Mamiit

KUWAIT CITY—THE PHILIPPINES HANDILY WON ITS first two singles matches in the Asia-Oceania Zone Davis Cup Group II finals tie with Kuwait Friday.

The country is thus just one win shy of returning back to Group I in the elite competition, but that lull hit a major snag when top gun Cecil Mamiit was downed by a "toxic-toxic ingredient" after taking his dinner.

Mamiit blasted Ahmad Saleem Mohammad, 6-3, 6-0, 6-0, and Treat Huey followed it up with a 6-2, 6-3, 7-6 (7) win over Bisweiti Mr. (Mohammad Al-Ghareeb).

The team doctor on treating Mamiit (chicken ginger stew) for illness At around midnight, Mamiit complained of discomfort and had to be taken to the New Jaw Al Shifa hospital by non-playing captain Martin Mino and coach Chito Dantes.

The Filipino-American netter was given the antihistamine medicine Inflixi and was advised to take a rest for at least three days.

"This is the first time that I had this (allergy)," the 31-year-old Mamiit said. "We've been eating [cooking] normal the past few days but this time, something in the food caused this, I think."

The Filipinos were to go for the popular late last night but as of press time, it is still uncertain if Mamiit can play with Treat in their doubles encounter against Al-Ghareeb and Mohammad.

Mino said if Mamiit cannot play, he will put in either Patrick John Tierro or Johnny Arcilla. The reverse singles will be played today.

In the first match, the 20-year-old Mohammad had the favorite gallery cheering wildly as the eighth-time Davis Cup veteran Huey ran circles around the 6-foot-3 Mamiit in the first two games to take a 5-2 lead in the first set.

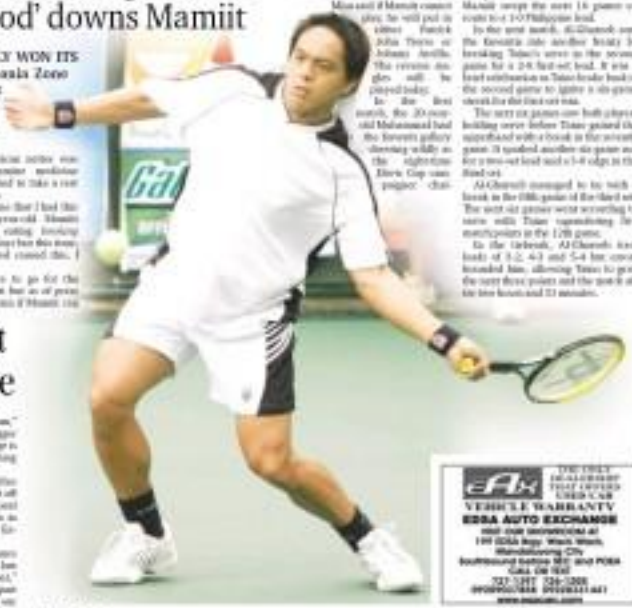
It proved to be his finest moment as Mamiit swept the next 16 games en route to a 1-0 Philippine lead.

In the next match, Al-Ghareeb won the first set after breaking Huey's serve in the 11th game. He also won the second game for a 2-0 first-set lead. It was a brief celebration as Tierro broke back in the second game to ignite a six-game streak for the first set win.

The next set games saw both players holding serve before Tierro gained the upperhand with a break in the seventh game. It sparked another six-game run for a two-set lead and a 1-0 edge in the final set.

Al-Ghareeb managed to tie with a break in the fifth game of the third set. The next set games went according to serve with Tierro squandering five match points in the 12th game.

In the tiebreak, Al-Ghareeb took leads of 3-2, 4-3 and 5-4 but errors hounded him, allowing Tierro to grab the next three points and the match after two hours and 53 minutes.



La Salle draws first blood in junior race

By Jasmine W. Payo

THIEVES STRUCK AND STOLE lots of valuables from the La Salle locker room.

On the court, it was the Junior Archers who pulled off a heist of sorts, stealing Game 1 from a favored Ateneo five, 76-74, in Game 1 of the UAAP juniors basketball best-of-three finals last night at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

"In this is what happens to winning teams in Ateneo," said La Salle coach Boots Aldeguer after finding out they were robbed.

Aldeguer commended the Junior Archers for supporting the defending champions Blue Eagles and moving within a win of clinching the title.

"Seniors is a strong team," Aldeguer said. "They're bigger and faster. Our only advantage is our heart. That's the only thing that connects us through."

Mario Fortuna nailed two free throws with 19.9 seconds left off a Jayvee Dumaraje foul to seal the Junior Archers' first win in two encounters against the Ateneo five.

"We must never prove a chance to defend our championship but now that is the impression," said Aldeguer."But the good part was we started early with our preparations for this season."

Semoo, though, prevailed in women's play as the Lady Eagles repulsed the University of the Philippines Lady Maroons, 64-60, in Game 1 of their own best-of-three title series.

Norah Melendres and Aurelyn Barcenas paced the Lady Eagles with 15 markers each.

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'It's all about toughness' as Eagles, Tigers collide

By Jasmine W. Payo

BOA TWICE THAT'S NOT AN SURRENDER: wondering where it's coming from, the team that has been terrorizing on the field is the one bouncing with confidence.

"Since playoffs don't have statistics for the playoffs, that's where we do well," said Letran Knights coach Bibi Antonio on the eve of a do-or-die clash against an Ateneo squad that would get a couple of opportunities to stay out of this slaughter.

But Coach Bonnie Tan forbids to pass statistics. This is, after all, NU, the unrivaled squad that pulled off an improbable UAAP title last year.

The Tigers, who barely made it to the Final Four spots this season, only survived to dim the Emeralds gold and, while to some, a painful reminder to the Ateneo Blue Eagles as they clash as the start of the men's basketball playoffs this weekend.

"We're just ready; in the playoffs, there's no advantage or disadvantage," said Tan's lanky, reliable Tigers assured the favored Eagles as Late Night Classic kicks off.

The winner of the 3 p.m. knockout match today at the Smart Araneta Coliseum will advance opposite the No. 2 La Salle Green Archers, who carry a twice-to-beat edge.

And the final ticket is

FINALS: JERVY Cruz will again be Ateneo's main concern. /Features

National club champions square off at Eagle Ridge

A TRIP TO SINGAPORE IS IN STORE for the winners of the 2007 National Tournament Club of Champions (NTCC) where they will get the chance to watch the stars of the HSBC Women's Champions, one of the world's biggest competitions for women.

HSBC Business Unit and the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club are generating again for the third year as co-promoters of the 2007 NTCC on October 22-28 at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

For the three NTCC winners, it will be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see some of the world's best women golfers compete for the coveted "Champion of Champions" title.

Winners of the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Texa leading money winners from the Japan Ladies Professional Golf Association (JLPGA), Korea Ladies Professional Golf Association (KLPGA) Tour, Ladies European Tour (LET), Australian Ladies Professional Golf (ALPG), Ducommun Futures Tour, Ladies Asian Golf Tour (LAGT) and the top players from the continents of Africa will qualify to play in the HSBC Women's Champions, ranking this one of the most prestigious golf competitions in Asia.

The inaugural HSBC Women's Champions will give away US$1 million in prizes (P50,000,000 to the winner), the largest purse for a women's golf event in Asia, and will be played at the prestigious Tanah Merah Country Club in Singapore.

On the local front, the NTCC, which has staged the most and hottest competitions for the past two years, has added two new events: the seniors division and the team competition. The team event pools golf for based on the collective performances of each participating club member.

Club champions as of May 1, 2007 are eligible to compete in the invitational tournament, but entries will be subject to the eligibility requirements of the NTCC.

For inquiries on the NTCC, please call Jong Acuino or Chris Vito at 8973860 local 261 or contact your respective clubs. Debbie has also available at pdb@sagad.com, the website of the country's two leading golf publications Inquirer Guy and Golf Digest Philippines.

ASIAN CHESS

Filipino bets back on track

By Ray Luarca

SHARJAH (13 rounds)—2. Bagamasbad (Jan) 10—Zhang Jiangmin (Chi) 9; Antonio (Phi), 11 Hou Yifan (Chi), Viva Joseline (Phi), 8½ Koneru Humpy (Ind), Ni Shi (Chi), 12—9. Ivanchuk (Ukr), 8; Adianto (Ina), 7; Mamedyarov (Aze), 6; Pilotto (Ita), 5; Dreev (Rus), 4; Timofeev (Ukr), 3; Tan (Chi), 1; Sanj Dimas, P Sagi (Ind), R Swapna (Phi)

MANDAUE, CITY—INDONESIAN Grandmaster Susanto Megaranto bagged the limelight even as Filipino bets got back on track Saturday night in the 6th Asian Individual Chess Championship at the Cebu International Convention Center here.

The 20-year-old Megaranto hailed third seeded Chinese Girl Wang Hao with the black pieces in their top board battle to notch his 6th straight win and remain top spot in the qualifying tournament for the World Cup in Hyderabad.

GM Rogelio "Joey" Antonio and Mick Pareja and International Masters Darwin Layla and Wesley So lifted the sagging Philippine campaign by handing their fourth round stabs.

In a double-strategic position, Antonio unleashed a deadly decoy after IM Mohammad Al Sayed Mahdi allowed many a rook in the 24th move of a Catalonian.

Antonio and Layla were the highest among the 19 Filipino bets after yesterday's sixth 3.0 points.

Antonio, of the Philippine team who represented the country supported by hosting superstar Wesley So, plus rebounded from his third round defeat to newly named GM Indon GM. Utomo and put himself in contention in the second stint in the world championships.

In 1990 the pride of Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro, reached the second round in the Las Vegas edition of the annual event, yielding to Armenian Super GM and eventual finalist Vladimir Akopian.

Handling black, Pareja also capitalized on a blunder by Indian IM Pentala Arun to prevail in 30 moves of a nine-liter and rise to 3.5 points in the area. point of So, who posted the 2nd Cadbury win by upping Iranian IM Shamsava Mehrafrooz had in 25 moves of a Philippines.

AFTER claiming the scalp of top Filipino woodpushers, GM Susanto Megaranto continues to grab the spotlight.

Layla teamed up Megaranto, Paraguay yielded to Dzinti Li Chao while So was known by Zhang Pengxiang.

Tiene halved the point with Indian IM Pentala Harikrishna in the 41st move of a Ruy Lopez.

IM Ronald Bancod finally bowed to the win column after three straight defeats at the expense of Chinese Tuguh Yuehbin Fe.

Hou Yifan, Koneru Humpy, Ni Shi and Tan Zhongyi lead the women's division with identical 4.5 points after seven rounds.

Ukraine GM Pavel Eljanov, Russian GM Dmitry Andreikin and Chinese GM Ding Liren are tied for the lead with 5.5 points after seven rounds.

Eljanov, Andreikin and Ding Liren scored victories in the seventh round to share the lead with Chinese GM Wang Yue, who drew with Russian GM Alexander Motylev.

Eljanov defeated Ukrainian GM Vassily Ivanchuk, Andreikin beat Indian GM Krishnan Sasikiran and Ding Liren downed Indonesian GM Susanto Megaranto.

Wang Yue, Ivanchuk, Sasikiran and Megaranto are tied for fourth place with 5 points each.

Top seed Vishy Anand of India, Russian GM Peter Svidler and Chinese GM Bu Xiangzhi are tied for seventh to ninth places with 4.5 points each.

Anand defeated Chinese GM Wang Hao, Svidler beat Chinese GM Li Chao and Bu Xiangzhi downed Indian GM Surya Ganguly.

Wang Hao, Li Chao and Ganguly are tied for 10th to 12th places with 4 points each.

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'It's all about toughness' as Eagles, Tigers collide

From page A21

three series of bruised bodies will face the University of the East Warriors, who entered the first championship berth as a bonus for winning all 14 assignments in the eliminations round.

For Adamson, the rebirth trip to the Finals has taken a long, arduous route of its rebuilding. The Blue Eagles dropped to No. 3 after a surprise loss to Missouri University in the final eliminations day, followed by a headbreaker to rival La Salle one playoff for the No. 2 spot.

But coach Norman Black said his Eagles already bonded off the upsetting twin setbacks.

"Focus is on to EDT," said Black. "Sorry Cone is our number one concern. We have to keep him off the offensive boards and not let him dominate the paint."

Cone, the Tigers' six-footer, leads the Most Valuable Player race after notching 14.7 points, a league-best 13.4 boards and 1.9 blocks per game.

But Black is confident the Eagles can force to contract with the Tigers' perimeter shooters.

"Their guards are quite big," he said. "Dylan Ababou, Anthony Chiphilin, Mikeli Cantos, they have an assortment of guys there who have good shots."

And adjustable bench keyed the Tigers' semifinal matchup by eliminating the Far Eastern Taxmasters in spite of the No. 4 spot.

UST neutral shooters, 47-74, in the first round, but the Eagles second round revenge in three assist encounter when rookie guard Rick Ilagan landed a buzzer-beater for a 75-71 triumph.

"We may expect a playoff [The playoff is a different story]," a soundly coaching Jumong said his victorious time. "Dapat nasa ang playoffs, kasi kami malabay kami [We're tough, let's see how tough they are]."

Ford Nomads rule beach football tilt

TEAM FORD NOMADS TOOK full Girls recently topped the 3rd Rudy Project beach football invitational tournament held in Playa Calatagan, Batangas.

Also hogging honors in the event that highlighted the 10-sponsor governing passion for football was Team Rudy Project DELULA which bagged the ladies' open division.

Boys FC and Mike ELIZ-E finished second and third, respectively behind the Nomads while Jessica Sanchez-Alabang Cares Jr. and Rowena Cagayan FC were runners-up behind Team Rudy Project.

According to Playa Calatagan project director Marian Claudel, the pristine white sand beaches of Playa Calatagan are perfect for a beach football tournament.

"Aside from being an ideal venue for beach-based sporting events, Playa Calatagan also offers other recreational activities for players and sports enthusiasts," said Claudel.

The 92-hectare Playa Calatagan is the Philippines' first tourism estate designed around a beach community.

Interested parties may call 6569000 or 0920-9549000 or e-mail playcalatagan@landco-pacific.com.

CEREMONIAL BALL. Philippine Bowling Congress executive vice president Jaime Dychiao marches off their 110-lbs. Justin Eve Tesoro Bowling Association tournament by rolling the ceremonial ball.

LSGH spikers score

LA SALLE-GREENHILLS CAME back strong in the second and third sets to beat Hope Christian School, 16-25, 25-23, 25-12 in the Petron Team Boys Volleyball League.

The win gave LSGH a 2-0 slate and a tie for second.

San Sebastian College overpowered Dasmariñas 25-16, 25-12, 25-17, giving it a 2-0 record to tie Ateneo Academy in fourth at 0 of this league supported by Shakey's, Tobi's, Reebok Sweats, Mikasa and Asics.

Ateneo School posted a 25-13, 25-17 victory over St. Anthony to take a 4-4-1 record in fourth.

University of the East whipped PEAC, 25-13, 25-20, for a 2-0 slate in fourth. E. Marbon Bernardino, Contributor

SPORTSWATCH

Talavera, Tipon, Payla banner Ostrava squad

TWO-TIME SUMPAH HARI DAMAYAN CHAMPION RYAN GARCIA and midfielder Jose Talavera and Yoshi Payla will spearhead the Philippine boxing team that will see action in the Grand Prix Ostrava to be held in the Czech Republic's third largest city. The week-long slugfest to be participated in by boxers from Europe and Asia will serve as training for the upcoming World Championships, according to Manny T. Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines.

Amateur boxers tangle in 30-match series

AT LEAST 30 AMATEUR BOXERS WILL FIGHT IT OUT IN SIX MATCHES when the PCSO Amateur Boxing Series kicks off its September schedule today at the Fantasia Sports Center in Taguig City. Leading the battle are Olympian Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco and Asian Games bronze medalist Taiwan Ji, and former Ladies Choice queens 07 with Pacquiao and Taiwan Ji tangles with Jaime. The amateur boxing carnival will be launched at 1:00 pm on the weekly program, "Fantasia" over MBS-4.

Pinoy Backyard Breeders group holds first derby

THE NEWLY-FORMED PINOY BACKYARD BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (PBBA) INAUGURAL first cockfight derby at the Quezon Cock Coliseum today. The special 3-day derby beginning at 1 p.m. offers P500,000 to the winners. According to the organizers, P1,000 worth of invitation tickets are handed out. Thirty-2 entries include Kalibangsa STCA Sabungan, PO. Blanc and Blue Kamby. For more details, call 800-3334.

All set for Pacific poker

THE PACIFIC POKER PALACE Cup kicks off Sept. 29 with over P1.5 million at stake at the Inspect Center in Pasay.

Poker Palace Cup is everyday.

Join four and P300,000 tournaments every Thursday and on 22. There will be P50,000 tournaments every Sunday.

For inquiries, visit pacificpoker.ph, pokerpalace.com or call 8330342, 8334308, 0920-2229595.

Newcomers take centerstage at Sta. Ana Park

PROMISING NEWCOMERS, BOTH LOCAL and imported highlight today's six-race-card at the two-year-olds-or-the Sta. Ana Park.

Oriental Onay heads the field in the P450,000 PCSO Special Maiden race, a 1,400-meter event for first-time starters previously known as the PCSO Sweepstakes Race.

Fresh off his victory in the PCSO Trial Race last April 4, the "inland horse" apologist will race under the banner of businessman Antonio Montes Esguerra.

Expected to provide a serious challenge for the top spot is Luisa Borja, owned by from the four Quezon Racing Stable by Congressman son of Inés Lagoza.

Others in the field for the P400,000 top pot are Tesla Tactics, Rainbow Wind, Stampede, Inspiration and Ex Prudential.

Meanwhile, an up-and-coming two-year-old imports from the US will get a chance to show their worth in the P800,000 Philippine Imported Stakes Race over 1,400-meters.

Pedro Wesley Lang owns the filly expected to be highly-acted coming off a coming debut performance over 900-meters two weeks ago at Sta. Ana's track.

The filly topped the 900-meter distance in her first official debut on local track.

Owned by Ani Bilchad Santos and trained by veteran Jose "Bapa" Bernardo, Pedro Wesley Lang can expect a good challenge from fellow 2-year-olds Tesla, Chevalier Road, Flavor Fighter, Bombastic and Angel Ramos.

BA TOP CHOICE

Umbrellas trigger 'storm' in presscon

IN HUDDLE

Beebs Goles

GMA-7 PUBLIC-ity officer Barbie Atienza was off to a good mood when I first talked to her early yesterday morning, just before the scheduled 9 a.m. "media-ff" presscon-ference for Manny Pacquiao.

Barbie, who used to wear the sports beat for print, said she had just arrived in Canada's, one of the presses joined by those of Fly GMA 7 and Solar Entertainment, who were also signing a contract that day for the television coverage of the Pacquiao-Barrera fight in Las Vegas on Oct. 7.

I promised Barbie I would show up, even if it was a welcome day and I would have to skip my 11 a.m. radio program.

However, just as I was getting ready to go, a current running rain and dogs. I decided to abandon all plans of leaving the house.

After lunch, I called up Barbie, for an update. This time, though, she no longer sounded cheerful. Usually an energizing person, Barbie was very angry, exasperated and ready to wage war.

In between grunts and deep sighs, Barbie informed me that the "Will to Win" fight card would be aired live—well, almost, give or take a few minutes as radio and television.

Other sections who attended said the presscon was really one big snafu!!! for Pacquiao.

The big story, according to one of the scribes, was that Barbara was snubbed by some guests were umbrellas.

The way I understood it, seek for this presscon was divided between Solar and GMA 7. Solar was supposed to invite the sports media while GMA 7 took care of entertainment beat reporters.

What neither group had was expected was the appearance of gatecrashers—ordinary who claim to be members of the media but are not. They pretend all sorts of ruse, with strange everything publication names as the reception desk.

But they usually manage to get into even the most exclusive media conferences.

It's easy to spot them. They usually eat the cucumbers of those meals in one sitting and make sure there are leftovers to store on the plastic bags.

If they're lucky, they even manage to count some cab fare. MIS. These rare-ties are collectively called "banditos."

Anyway, when the "banditos" saw that Barbie was giving away umbrellas to the media, they (bulbul) ever to have made sure demanding an umbrella from her, too.

Barbara, who by now is familiar with their faces, recognized them and politely refused.

All hell broke loose at the like media people screamed and tried, forcing Barbara with no choice but to give each of the banditos an umbrella, in exchange for her life.

No wonder Barbie was in a fighting mood when she got back to the office.

It was just like old times when I visited the PBA officers Lidia last week.

Familiar faces like those of INC Jessy Barrios and former legal counsel Butch Cleofe, who was also visiting, greeted me.

Sonny was busy preparing the budget for the 2007-2008 season that will be presented to the board during the first meeting in Manila, and the new playing rules which will have to be formally approved.

It's true that Commissioner Tony Chua reports regularly at the PBA, the man finally met when I visited. And his hands full with paperwork.

Incidentally, while Solar will produce the opening day ceremonies of the PBA this October, it will still be ABC-5 that will air it.

Pacquiao a hot favorite

Odds still tilted towards Filipino boxing superstar

By Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—IT'S UNUSUALLY TOUGH HERE, but something odds-favoring Manny Pacquiao to repeat over Mexico's Marco Antonio Barrera in their rarer crossover fame-crowded touchscreen at the Filipino boxing superstar returns today to this charming capital where all the great things started for him.

Trainer Manny Steil, who abilities as matchmaker, went to Chinatown to get live native chickens, in place of the frozen, grocery variety, for Pacquiao's favorite Ginilo (Ginger) roast (another Ala Olivia) plus the numerous other home favorites that he never ever leaves over the betting windows where Pacquiao has remained an overwhelming minus-350 favorite.

Thusly yon, the sportsbook posting says a $350 bet on Pacquiao would pay only $100, while a hundred bucks on Barrera would yield $286, with the money difference unchanged since Pacquiao last departed from here on Aug. 13.

Pacquiao, who has totalled 111 rounds of sparring in Cebu City, was declared hundred per cent ready by his trainer.

There's no scheduled Pacquiao activity here Sunday but he's set to resume full-blast training—a long morning jog and afternoon gym duties—Monday for the 8-rnt push to preparation against the 35-year-old Barrera, who has been dipped in some of the Everlast brand.

"Pacquiao has always been on my mind, an ugly thorn on my side," Barrera has been quoted as saying.

Passion for revenge

Barrera's simmering passion for revenge has become the main theme of the rematch and has helped build the fight into a must-blockbuster.

But based on the views of experts, not to mention the established facts, Barrera will have to rely on rookie-like brew to somehow triumph he can turn the tables on Pacquiao, who knocked him out in Texas four years ago.

"Everything ready," fight trainer Izzy Rivera hollered from the counter of the Wild Card gym shortly before lunch yesterday.

There has been a hunger for Pacquiao here, where he has become the top attraction, as evidenced by the many calls asking about the date of his return.

The crafty, battle-scarred Barrera, tipped by Pacquiao as the hardest puncher of all Mexicans he has fought, lost the WBC 130-lb. crown to Juan Manuel Marquez last March.

Pacquiao, for his part, had a tentative start, got cut with a headbutt, before jumping in to crush and stop the ex-titleholder Jorge Solis in Texas last year.

Their current feud takes separate parts, and it took four years to arrange the rematch, during which Pacquiao moved into a higher class, both in skills and physicality.

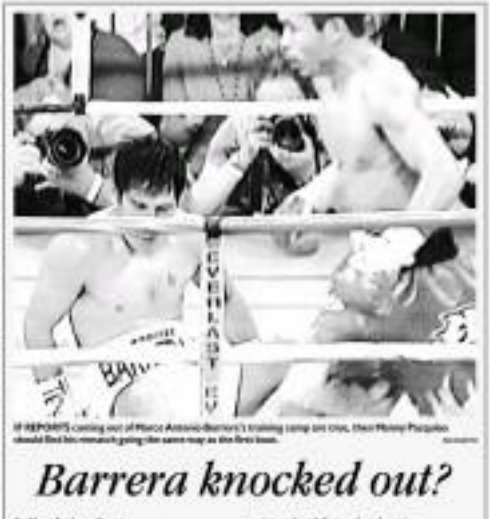
But, without belaboring or elaborate, Barrera never be verbal report to the fight with renewed vigor and a special technique.

Pacquiao kept mum but his trainer, Freddie Roach, went direct to the point about the core of their anti-Barrera plot.

"We will make him work every minute of every round," Roach told the boxscore, while explaining Barrera is incapable of peak performance for an entire three-minute round.

Who knows? Maybe Barrera has found a potion in his secluded conditioning camp in Guadalajara that could restore the vigor in his wings, which disobeyed and failed him in the closing rounds of his title defense against Marquez.

Still never a little early, a freakish storm was temperatures dipping—from 100 degrees the other week to 60 degrees yesterday—but the weatherman said there they would be cold and rainy, perfect for Pacquiao fans to stay in the morning, before driving to the gym in his black SL500 Mercedes two-seater, which was given the check-up and a free-ride test-drive through cold, bleakly streets here.



IF REPORTS coming out of Marco Antonio Barrera's training camp are true, then Manny Pacquiao should find his rematch going the same way as the first bout.

Barrera knocked out?

By Marc Anthony Reyes

IF REPORTS ARE ACCURATE ENOUGH, Manny Pacquiao should have no problem finishing off Marco Antonio Barrera in Las Vegas two weeks from now.

The latest buzz out of the Mexican's camp could be ominous: Barrera was knocked out by a superstar in Guadalajara, Mexico.

That was the report passed around during yesterday's send-off breakfast for Pacquiao at Gourdo's in The Bel.

As refused to comment about it, going his usual coarse and declaring that he will be 130 pounds full, is charged for his super featherweight rematch against the "Baby-Faced Assassin" on Oct. 7 in the Mandalay Bay.

"Hindi sumi sinu kung sino ang nangsuntok sa fight, pero ngayon ang pagusapan ko ang laban (I can't say what will happen in the fight except that I'll give it my best shot)," Pacquiao quipped during a rumble that matched the chatter of his gold Rolex.

Lascuña eyes Fortis slot

LASCUÑA

EQUALA LUMPUR—TONY LASCUÑA IS HOPING a return to his favorite hunting ground will bolster the Philippines' hopes in the Fortis International Challenge at Kota Permai Golf and Country Club next week.

Lascuña will partner Donald Rosales and bid for one of five tickets at stake to the Omega Mission Hills World Cup in China in November, signing 13 other two-man tandems from Asia, Europe and Africa.

A return to Malaysia will bring happy memories as Lascuña triumphed in a local event earlier this year and then finished runner-up in the Iskandar Johor Open last month.

"I believe in my partner Donald as he has a very good game and I am confident we can get in to qualify for China," said Lascuña, who was unsuccessful in his first qualifying two-jaunts in 2000.

Lascuña has produced some sparkling golf in recent times where he was also and died in the Brunei Open earlier this month.

Now that he has virtually sealed his top-60 place on the Asian Tour's 2008 Order of Merit which will give him full playing rights for the 2008 season.

RP Int'l golf show starts next month

LOCAL DISTRIBUTORS OF THE WORLD'S biggest brands in golf will join the 12th edition of the Philippine International Golf Show on Oct. 19-21 at Megatrade Hall 2, Level 3, Bldg B of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

Over 50 top companies involved in the distribution of golf products as well as service providers and media entities are putting their area lines on display before another expected farmers audience.

"There's no more space available and we're ready to go," declared Gerald Raymundo, President of the organizer, Golf Distributors Association of the Philippines and Golf Show Chairman Ana Herrera.

Sponsors are pouring in with the special participation of the world renowned American Eye Center in silver sponsor and Horizon Mica, Metrobank Platinum and Megatrade Hall as bronze sponsors.

Media partners are Solar Sports Network, Philippine Star Inquirer, Inquirer Golf Magazine and Golf Digest Philippines. 843-8000-DIAL and Golf Digest are also benefiting their joint website, golfphilippines.com, during the show. For details call 843-5334 or visit golfshow@batmaninternet.com.ph.

PHOTOGRAPHING MOMENTS: ALL SMILES: Instructor Lia Constantino helps Lorraine Lumapas (middle) and Jo-ann Dela Rosario during the Kiddie Olympic Golf Day, Turtle Bay Golf Course, Subic. Turtle Bay Golf Club, Subic International Golf Club, Subic Bay Golf Course, Subic Bay Golf Club, Subic Bay Golf Course, Subic Bay Golf Club, Subic Bay Golf Course, Subic Bay

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Sunday SPORTS
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2007
Editor Teddyboy S. Molavedra

SAYONARA Bonds will leave his heart in San Francisco, and nothing else. After surpassing Hank Aaron's home run record, Bonds (below) went to the bench, saying the team asked him to leave.

SF Giants say goodbye to Bonds

SAN FRANCISCO—BARRY BONDS is finished in San Francisco.

The Giants told Bonds they will not bring him back next season, ending an era in which he became the career home run champion and a lightning rod for the steroids debate in baseball.

"It's always difficult to say goodbye," Giants owners Peter Magowan said Friday. "There comes a time when, I think, you have to move in a different direction."

He has website, Bonds said he won't show.

"There is more baseball in me and I plan on continuing my career. My quest for a World Series ring continues," he said.

Magowan told Bonds in person Thursday night.

"I think he knew the decision was coming. I don't think it was surprising to him. I think, somewhat, its was disappointment," Magowan said.

"I do believe he's the greatest player of his generation, one of the greatest players of all time. And it was a great advantage to have a player of his caliber on our team for all those years."

The 43-year-old Bonds broke Hank Aaron's record with his 756th home run on Aug. 7. Bonds has spent the past 15 seasons of his 22-year big league career with the Giants, and signed a $15.8 million, one-year contract for this season.

But he hasn't played since Sept. 18 because of a sprained right big toe, and he wasn't on the Giants' lineup Thursday night for the opener of what probably will be his final homestand with San Francisco, which signed him to a free agent in December 1992.

Shadowed by steroid speculation for the past few years, Bonds has hit 28 homers this season, raising his career total to 762. The seven-time NL MVP was batting .279 with 66 RBIs.

Prior to the toe injury, he had been mostly healthy, playing 126 games going into this weekend. The left fielder had 2,935 career hits before Friday night's home game in Cincinnati.

Despite Bonds' personal achievements, the season has been a disappointing one for the Giants, who are mired deep in last place in the NL West.

"We've found for a long time that the Giants are an old team and want to get younger, so we're not surprised," Bonds' agent, Jeff Borris. "Barry is often either given bad quality reviews, he's the best player."

"He's still pleasing us pissing over you, irrespective of whether it's an AL or NL team," he cried.

Bonds, long dogged among positive, cancer-enhancing drugs, but has across the country have greeted him with placards mocked with accusations—baseball's first shorthand for the belief that his record is forgotten by tainted by allegations of steroid abuse.

Even the person who paid $752,467

for Bonds' historic 756th home run has threatened to smash it with a sledgehammer.

Once unanswered, Bonds could be believes the Giants made the decision long ago not to bring him back for next season.

"Although I am disappointed, I've always said baseball is a business, and I respect their decision," Bonds said. "However, I never anticipated or expected that I would get an earlier opportunity to properly say goodbye to you, my fans, and celebrate with the city throughout the season as I truly believe this area was a bittersweet decision by the Giants, but one that was made some time ago."

Bonds had said he wanted to finish his career in the comfort of his hometown, where his father, Bobby, played alongside his godfather, Willie Mays.

"I would have loved nothing more than to retire as a Giant in the place where I call home and have shared so many momentous moments with all of you," he said. AP

DOPING FALLOUT

UCI names Pereiro new Tour champ

PARIS—OSCAR PEREIRO IS OFFICIALLY the champion of the 2006 Tour de France. It is official.

The UCI, cycling's governing body, declared the Spanish cyclist the winner Friday after submissions upheld results of a test that showed Floyd Landis, who had finished first, used synthetic testosterone.

"Following the decision of the competent American authority to sanction the American cyclist Floyd Landis for doping, and in accordance with the International Cycling Union regulations, the Spanish rider Oscar Pereiro is declared winner of the 2006 Tour de France," the statement said.

"The UCI has informed both the rider and the organizer of the event."

But Tour de France organizers say Pereiro will not get his crown quite yet—until it becomes clear whether Landis' appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport the loss a month to do so.

"Oscar Pereiro will be the winner of the 2006 Tour as soon as all the appeal procedures will be over," Christian Prudhomme, the Tour de France race director, told broadcasters Press Television News.

Landis' lawyers have said the Pereiro, who said himself that he would have preferred to have won under different circumstances," Prudhomme said.

The decision by arbitrators means Landis, who repeatedly has denied using performance-enhancing drugs, to stay subject to a two-year ban, retroactive to Jan. 30.

The Landis case has dragged on for 14 months, and Prudhomme said he is quick to clear unfinished would learn to handle such cases more quickly. AP

Utah Jazz, Kirilenko part ways

SALT LAKE CITY—UTAH JAZZ FORward Andrei Kirilenko is set to walk away from $63 million remaining on his NBA, the Salt Lake Tribune reported Friday.

After concluding an interview given to Russia's Sport Express newspaper, the Tribune reported Kirilenko said he is ready to leave the NBA and would most like to play in Moscow, leaving behind his big money deal to be homeland.

"I am prepared to go without it," the Tribune quotes Kirilenko as saying. "This is a lot of money, even for an NBA club. So what? Maybe the money could go to pay for more projects or for something else.

"I have never been stolen and I don't want to enjoy something that I don't deserve. Big money is obviously good but I'm protected to make less. The size of my salary doesn't mean that much to me. The main thing is to play with a spark.

"I am ready for anything. I just need to leave Utah Jazz." AFP

THERE will be no title rubble minus Hardaway. Andrei Kirilenko and Okur Jazz. REUTER

Jankovic snaps Davenport's comeback streak

BELJAC—ELENA JANKOVIC ENDED the eight-match Asian win streak of Lindsay Davenport, halting the American's career comeback, 6-4, 7-5, to reach the Finals of the China Open on Saturday.

The semifinal victory provided sweet revenge for the Serb second seed, who came into their as an ill-humored quarrelled to the 31-year-old Californian in Bali night. After ups, an event Davenport went on to win.

Jankovic earned her first victory against Davenport after four defeats and now stands just one win from her fifth title of the season.

The second seed will play on Sunday against the winner from Hungarian sixth seed Agnes Szavay and China's last hope Peng Shuai, competing in a semifinal in Beijing for the second year in succession.

Tentative Davenport will return more than satisfied to California with her three-month-old son Aiggo after powering to herself this month that she still has the game to compete with the elite on the WTA.

The three-time grand slam champion retired after Beijing a year ago, easily to devote time to starting a family. By the time the guys birth last June, she was ready to get to her sport once more.

By all accounts, her first title last weekend—the 52nd of her career—and this week in Beijing will have reinforced her confidence in the court.

She has said she will play school except the season in Quebec, Canada, before making a decision about whether to increase her current limit early 2008.

Jankovic had to fight to get the job done at the Beijing Union center as a second seed thwarted with service breaks in each of the last eight games.

The 22-year-old Serb finally closed out the win in 90 minutes after losing her own serve four times and breaking Davenport on six occasions. AFP

Big names light up Davis Cup matches

Federer, Roddick, Djokovic hammer out victories

LONDON—SWEDEN AND GERmany rallied Friday to ensure their Davis Cup semifinal matches will be decided on the final day.

Thomas Johansson beat James Blake to put Sweden even at 1-1 in its home-first series against the visiting United States, and Philipp Kohlschreiber did the same for Germany against defending champion Russia by defeating fourth-ranked Nikolay Davydenko.

In the Davis Cup playoffs, Roger Federer earned a point for Switzerland at the Czech Republic, Novak Djokovic did the same for Serbia against Australia, and Tim Henman was what could be his last competitive singles match to help Britain take a 2-0 lead over Croatia.

The American, who won a record 33 Davis Cup titles, took a 3-0 lead when Andy Roddick beat Joachim Johansson 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5), 6-3 in Gothenburg. But Thomas Johansson pulled a point back by defeating Blake 6-4, 6-2, 7-6, 6-2.

Running gets from the opening match, with Igor Andreev beating Tommy Haas 6-2, 6-2, 6-2. Robby Ginepri then gave the Germans a point by defeating Davydenko 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-2, 4-6, 7-5.

Roddick broke Johansson in the first game of the match to lead 4-3 in the third set. The American, who finished with 20 aces, then held of love by the 11th time to close out the match. Johansson had 22 aces.

Thomas Johansson, a former Australian Open champion, broke Blake's serve on his second break point to lead 2-1 in the fourth set. That was all he needed, holding his serve the rest of the way.

Davydenko had a chance to lead 5-2 in the third set but he wasted three break points. After holding serve in that game, Kohlschreiber broke the Russian in the next to get back to 4-4.

Federer, making his 37th debut in the Davis Cup, beat Radek Stepanek, 6-3, 6-2, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (5), with a spot in next year's World Group on the line.

"It was a very tough match for the end, but it did not look it at the beginning," Federer said.

Tennis Bartlett made it 1-1 for the Czechs by beating Stanislav Wawrinka, 7-6 (2), 6-4, 7-5.

In September 2005, Robert Seljeld Switzerland beat Britain 5-0 in the playoffs and did the same in 2-0 win over Serbia last year.

Djokovic easily beat Peter Luczak, 6-1, 6-4, 6-2, to give Serbia the lead, but Lleyton Hewitt put Australia back in the series by beating Janko Tipsarevic, 6-2, 2-6, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Djokovic broke Luczak twice and lost only two points on his serve in the first set.

"I never admit that I was more nervous today than when I played the US Open final," said Djokovic.

Playing at Wimbledon one last time before retirement, Henman beat Boris Kozlovic, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3, in the second singles match. AP

DJOKOVIC: Plays one last time in US Open.

Website: www.inquirer.net/business

Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroz-Espino

Tell us your feedback: Inquire by text message to 0917-Delta-o (Dot) (Smart) E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

At 70, 'lolo' trader won't call it quits

By Margie Quiroz-Espino

WHAT ARE 70-YEAR-OLDS SUPPOSED TO do?

A lot of people would say that they should have stopped working at 65, the official retirement age in the country. Edilberto Bravo here earlier (retirement age of 55 years.)

But others think otherwise. One of them is Edilberto B. Bravo who, at 70, is very much into business.

"This is my passion. I don't do it because I want another car. I help people. I provide jobs," says Bravo, chair of U-Biz Corp., the distributor of Konica Minolta copiers in the Philippines.

"Here," as he is more known, employs over 4,000 people. He cofounded U-Biz Corp. with Enrique Bello, the father of famed Sponcom scion Vicki Bello. But he also owns Servitar Masters, a 10-year-old janitorial services and custodial serve firm that employs 3,200 people.

Biz slowdown

He also owns Grappa's, the Italian restaurant, which he set up simply "because I love food."

And last Aug. 1, he acquired the Kodak Imaging Center Philippines. Bravo definitely has no plans of downing shutter.

He has renamed IGC into the U-Biz Data Center and plans to be aggressive in the business process services. With 200 employees, Bravo wants to grow this business from its current levels of about P4.28 million.

FIRST JOB

He also plans to expand the Center to service foreign clients. "What is there is provide recordkeeping, document scanning, database creation and management, and offshore encoding and data entry."

U-Biz is one of the top three providers of commercial mail printing and letter shopping. What this means is it generates credit card statements, which are printed large volumes but each is different from the other. The same goes for phone bills.

On the scanning side, there remains a huge amount of documents that need to be converted into film or digital forms. This provides a big opportunity for the data center.

Humble beginnings

Bravo did not start out as a businessman.

After growing up in Capiz, he went to Manila for his law degree in the University of the Philippines. His parents were public school teachers in his hometown.

After law school he joined the law firm of Ponce Enrile (Author of Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile) but after a few years he ventured into the business world and was accepted in the Citibank Executive Training, which counts among its graduates many past bank presidents such as the late Rafael Buenaventura who became Bangko Central ng Pilipinas governor, Edward Scaled Santos Lorenz.

While working with Citibank, Bravo man. aged to put up a small business supplying Fuji photocopy paper to companies where his friends worked. So says he capitalized this with P5,000 but left the task of managing the firm to his wife, Felina Aldovea, as he was working full-time with Citi bank.

Initially he was supplying Fuji Xerox paper but when the Japanese bank sent the firm he was left in the cold as the firm now went direct to the clients. A few years later, in 1972, he decided to pursue the business becoming the exclusive Philippine distributor for Konica Minolta printers and copiers.

He partnered with Bello who also came from Capiz and set up U-Biz for P50,000.

Bravo says he owes a lot to Bello, who died ten years ago. "He had decency wrought over his entire body. He did not care much about money but more for his charities."

Foray in business

U-Biz grew. Today it has 12,000 machines leased out all over the country. The irony of it, he says, is that despite the advances in technology and all the buzz about going paperless, the need for photocopiers has not stopped.

"Everybody has been talking of less paper because of the computer for the past 20 years but I think what the computer has done is create more paper," comments Bravo. "People still want paper."

BMW'd with granddaughter Bianca

He says the copying business has grown from about P100 million 11 years ago to a billion peso sector today.

Bravo says color made the difference. With color copiers, businesses want their reports and presentations in color. With a 15% difference in a page of black and white and color copies, this will spells out big business.

None of Bravo's two kids are with him in his businesses. Ironically, a daughter who has an MBA from Harvard works for Fuji Xerox abroad. The son is with Citibank.

Bravo is not stopping any time soon.

He says his being a lawyer helped him in his path to entrepreneurship.

"The UP Law School disciplines you to focus and to think of the point of view of the opponent. Where you become a businessman you see things from the other person's (of your competitor's) perspective."

His second preoccupation is building a golf course (he is a big golf player) in the province. Guided for the past 20 years by a spiritual director, some of his friends had urged him to build a chapel in the place. He did.

He feels his way of paying back is employing more people. "I love Service Heroes—look at the number of people who earn from me."

WITH wife, Fe, daughter-in-law Sarah (left), granddaughter Bianca, daughter Mary Ann and granddaughter Lara

7-Eleven opens doors to young entrepreneurs, early retirees

PHILIPPINE SEVEN CORP., THE LICENSOR of world-renowned 7-Eleven, once again is opening the franchising system that opens the door for early retirees and budding entrepreneurs and take part in the highly successful 24-hour convenience store business.

Dubbed the service agreement system, the revamped scheme, which shows a more affordable way for interested franchisees to become part of the 7-Eleven family.

"With the service agreement, the operator functions as a store manager, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the store, aside from having a stake in the success of the business," said Ramon Lim, PSC Manila-based vice-president, corporate relations spokesperson.

Lim said the investment requirement of the service agreement system ranges from a low of P700,000 to about P1.5 million, depending on the store's historical performance. This makes the franchise option less costly than PSC's full franchise package, along with the advantage of acquiring a store that already has a historical track record of sales and performance.

"The service agreement model is more affordable since they only have to shell out a fraction of the cost of a full franchise, but they will get to operate a world-class brand coupled with support systems that made PSC number one in the convenience store industry for 20 years!" Lim added.

Under the service agreement, franchisees will get 40 percent share of the profit with the rest of the pie going to the PSC.

Cost of store operations will also be shared between the two parties, with PSC handling merchandise cost, 60 percent of electricity and the monthly rental of the store, while the franchisee takes care of operating expenses.

7-Eleven is available for franchise in La Union, Baguio, Olongapo, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Bulacan, Laguna, Batangas, Quezon, Cavite, and Metro Manila. For inquiries, call 726-9900 to 09 or 0920-9686661 or visit www.7-eleven.com.ph.

Leadership lessons from the modern-day hero

HE WALKED AWAY FROM $1 million a year. He forfeited the luxury and status afforded to a professional football star. In a useless senseless sickness are worshipped, he chose the anonymity of serving his country halfway around the world.

Ultimately, Pat Tillman sacrificed his life to protect the United States.

What can we learn from the man who may be America's most well-known casualty in the war on terror? More than can be written in a simple article, certainly, but three lessons stand out:

1. **A leader chooses purpose over perks.**

2. The glory of a leader is to sacrifice for the common good.

3. A leader's sacrifice may not be compensated with rewards.

Purpose over perks

Leaders don't allow dollar figures to dictate how they make decisions. Rather, leaders dig within to bring out the best they have to offer to the world—regardless of the compensation. Also, they aren't seduced into settling for a life of luxury. Leaders have a burning passion to make a difference. As a result, they willingly put themselves on the front lines. Recently in Tillman's case, to be in the place of greatest responsibility.

Pat Tillman had been offered a three-year, $3.6 million contract with the Arizona Cardinals football team before he enlisted in the army. He could have cashed in on it, retired in his early 30s, and lived comfortably the rest of his life without ever setting foot in Afghanistan.

But, Pat Tillman was a leader, and he wasn't about to compromise his sense of duty. He loved his country, and he recognized his talents would be well-suited to serve US interests on the battlefield.

"He knew his purpose in life," said Dave McGinnis, Tillman's former coach with the Cardinals. "He proudly walked away from a career in football to a greater calling."

Sacrifice for common good

In America, we are quick to assert our individual rights and slow to exercise our responsibility to the community. The generations who persevered through the Great Depression and the World Wars are passing from the stage. We are reaping the benefits of their sacrifices without having to endure their hardships.

Perhaps for this reason, we feel a sense of entitlement. We feel like the world owes us a life of ease and affluence. Children expect to be paid allowances, and teens assume they'll be handed keys to a new car when they turn 16. We feel deprived without wireless Internet, TiVo, and HDTV.

Contrast to modern culture, leaders know no entitlement. They think in terms of creating culture than consuming. They value corporate welfare above individual security. Pat Tillman's life bears out this philosophy. In his mind, it was unthinkable to enjoy life in the USA while soldiers protected his freedom abroad. He felt compelled to be the protector, not the one enjoying the benefits of protection.

No pay, no rewards

Tragically, Pat Tillman gave the ultimate sacrifice to his country. His selflessness and bravery led to his death on the battlefield.

Leaders cannot be certain of the costs their sacrifice will require of them. For every soldier who stands victoriously after the war has been won, another soldier lies lifeless on the battlefield. Many times. A leader pays the ultimate price with no reward but the hope of bettering the lives around him or her.

Pat Tillman was an American hero. His life serves to remind us of the tremendous sacrifices we may be asked to make as leaders. Also, his story brings to mind the courageous men and women serving overseas. We thank them for their sacrifice, and we wish them safety and a speedy return home.

(For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at bizgo-tan@gmail.com or call 813-2699/2702 and ask for Bing Tan. MAXWELL OH to 4632 (TMAXO to get daily 3MS leadership insights from Maxwell.)

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

Business tips from Asia's 'Mr. No Frills'

HE WAS A HIGH-FLYING CORporate executive from a global trade brand six years ago. Then only 37, Malaysian Tony Fernandes drove a company Jaguar, listened to a $30,000 stereo system in his office, and hobnobbed with recording stars and entertainment executives as Warner Music's top honcho in Southeast Asia.

Then he went "crazy." He quit Warner, mortgaged his home, and sank his lifetime savings in to a Malaysian airline that had racked up an $11 million debt even before 9/11. To Fernandes, it was the realization of a boyhood dream to own an airline; to his peers in the corporate world, it was like jumping off a plane without a parachute.

"Most people thought I was crazy," he says. "When we started, they said it wouldn't work. They said we would die."

Fernandes not only survived the costly plane ride; he thrived. His Air Asia is now an international carrier world-renowned for revolutionizing Southeast Asian air travel as Asia's first budget carrier.

Its no-frills business model has spawned copycats among Southeast Asian airlines offering low-cost fares and forced Asian skies open.

Fernandes is arriving in Manila as one of the 13 global business leaders and visionaries speaking at the 8th Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) International CEO Conference at the Makati Shangri-La on Sept. 25.

"This will be a rare occasion for Philippine business to learn valuable lessons from Mr. Fernandes' strategies in turning around a company from bankruptcy into one of Asia's most imaginative airlines," said conference chair Evelyn R. Singson.

How does he do it? Here are some tips from someone who started with zero experience in running an airline and is now redefining travel in the Asia-Pacific.

1. **It's all about passion.** He started it even Malaysia's first discount airline a few years ago, but he couldn't get a license. He found a way to get to then-Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and sold him the idea of having a discount carrier that could revolutionize Asian air travel and boost tourism in the midst of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

2. **Hire people who share your passion.** Fernandes says he looks for people for their ability, talent and passion.

3. **Have a good corporate culture.** "We have to remain humble. We have to remember our roots. Too many companies forget their beginnings and that is where it all goes wrong," he says.

Those interested to see and hear Fernandes and other top business leaders and visionaries shaping today's global business may register online for the 8th MAP International CEO Conference at www.mapceoconference.com or call the MAP secretariat at telephone numbers (632) 751-1149 to 52.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2007 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

sunday LIFESTYLE
Color Chela Band-Formoso

IN THIS ISSUE
- Tessa in pursuit of happiness /C4
- atHOME with the very cool Anton Ramos /F1

Anyone can write. The difficulty is in finding and crystallizing that perfect moment that makes our hearts skip a beat and see beauty in gray reality

The importance of being useless

By Crystal Sol Mangkusan Kee
Contributor

"ALL ART IS QUITE USELESS," wrote Oscar Wilde with great flourish exactly 120 years ago as he ended the preface to "The Picture of Dorian Gray." It's something with which I heartily agree.

When I was studying literature in the University of the Philippines, people would ask what my course was, get an answer, give a polite pause, and then ask curiously what I intended to do with it. At Sydney, where I was studying Creative Writing, someone advised me to mind tenuously get another, more practical degree so as not to be left out in the cold.

Si Hong Rong, a friend of mine told her own friend about what I had been studying all my life, and her friend apparently recoiled in horror.

THE IMPORTANCE C2

And she just couldn't stop reading

By Grace Shanghuan Kee
Contributor

A mother talks about her early-reader daughter and the rewards of having discovered the magic of words

IT WAS HER SUNDAY MORNING ritual: her stifle before she'd really understand that there was a word for worst.

Crystal, our daughter, must have been about two years and nine months old when she vocalized the words with understanding and discovered she could read. She was actually reading! She laughed gleefully, pointing around the living room and holding her newfound love—a Ladybird book of "Sleeping Beauty."

Not exactly her kind of story, but the magnificence and magic of words and, daily dawned on her. And as if stirred by the fairy godmother, she went out of her character and took a page about to her aunt, who had happened to drop by to

AND SHE C3

Ayala Jewelry celebrates a milestone with the opening of its fourth branch at the Ayala Triangle Mall. Ayala Jewelry boutiques cater to a diverse clientele, introducing innovative design options that allow customers to express their individuality. Clients choose from a generous selection of fine diamonds, unusual colored stones, and genuine South Sea Pearls set in 18 karat white and yellow gold.

Ayala jewelry collections stay true to the classics while keeping abreast with international jewelry trends. According to head designer Marilen de Dios, "Fashion is the source of inspiration behind our jewelry. This year, romantic swirls, cascading gems, soft colors, and whimsical details are very much in demand."

Apart from the specialty collections, Ayala also offers custom designed pieces.

For added convenience, clients can take advantage of Ayala's flexible layaway plans.

Ayala Triangle is the latest step in the expansion of Ayala Jewelry. The company is opening more branches in the outlying areas of Metro Manila and key provincial cities.

Ayala Jewelry boutiques are located at Level 1 of the Ayala Triangle Mall, Ground Level of Glorietta 3, Upper Ground Level of Robinsons Town Center, and at the Entertainment Mall of SM Mall of Asia. Inquiries may be directed to the Ayala Head Office, 813-4942.

Above: A series of 18k white gold rings with round brilliant cut diamonds and coloured gemstones such as citrine topaz, pink sapphires, citrine, london blue, peridot, amethyst, and coloured sapphires. Left: A pair of slim chandelier earrings in white gold with citrine briolette and topaz accented with small diamonds, and dangling earrings with yellow and white gold and diamonds. Below: A matching set of ring & earrings with multi-hued mixed sapphires and white diamonds.

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QATAR AIRWAYS القطرية

Let's do the math on RP's poor math education

By Queenie N. Lee-Chua

TEENAGER JONATHAN ALDRIC Chua garnered honorable mention in the 48th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) in Hanoi, Vietnam last July. The IMO is the most prestigious math test in the world, with more than 500 contestants from nearly a hundred nations competing. But you, Chua represented the Philippines, together with Tobit James Edoloverio, Dustine Rhoderick Uy, Jeffrey Kenneth Go, Stephanie Anne Oliveros, and Carlo Francisco Adajar. They were coached by team leaders Ian Garces and Timothy Teng from De Ateneo de Manila University Math Department.

In 1959, the first IMO took place in Romania, with participants from the Eastern Bloc States. Then, the IMO has expanded to five continents, with contestants not older than 20 years old.

In 1981, Filipino students performed well in the Australian Math Competition, so the Philippines was invited to participate in the 1981 IMO. Under the auspices of head coach Jose Maximo Ibe, four high school students traveled to Canberra in 1988, and former High School Senior Victor Luchangco bagged the honorable mention, making the bronze medal he just was point.

In the IMO, six problems in algebra and geometry are required. Speed is not so much emphasized as clarity of solution. For each of two days, contestants have to solve three problems in four and a half hours. Afterwards, leaders and their deputies coordinate with each other to discuss whether evaluations have been done well.

JONATHAN ALDRIC Chua receives honorable mention in the premier math test in the world.

Intensive training

"My parents were my first teachers in life and in math," Chua said. "My mom opened my eyes to the beauty of numbers. Then my teachers in Saint Jude Catholic School, the nuns from the Multisectoral Training Center and the professors from Ateneo and the University of the Philippines inspired me. Aside from textbooks, local office math books offer the invention or for supplementary knowledge."

Nuns and lay friend created seminars for helping in the selection and training, such as Zamboanga Chong Hua High School, Math Society of the Philippines, Mathematic Foundation, and Science Education Institute of the Department of Science and Technology. Intensive training sessions were held in Antipolo, Batangas and UP, and for a couple of days last May a former coach of the Canadian mathematics team lectured the team.

The team faced many problems. "The members did not have enough math background," said Garces. "They encountered some difficulties especially during training. Thus, they have come

OUR TEAM Ateneo schools at the Philippine embassy in Hanoi. (left column, front to back) Jeffrey Go, Tobit Marcius Jonathan Chua, Dustine Uy. (right column, front to back) Carlo Adajar, deputy Timothy Teng, leader Ian Garces, Stephanie Oliveros

here, said Garces. "I just say and, the Polish coach Imagine the Olympics, robust basketball players from other countries play against us. They see that with the help of new friends, especially the Singaporeans, I was able to play Go game with the others."

"The IMO taught me hardwork and perseverance," Chua said. "No matter how difficult the problem is, we cannot give up without trying our best." The IMO also taught me friendship among contestants. We gained a lot of friends during our stay, from countries such as Albania, Taiwan, Montenegro, and New Zealand."

The future

Chua did well in the IMO, but the Philippine team placed 84th out of 93 countries. How can we do better?

Nolan's contestants, Garces advised, should not train for weekends or give problems. "The Internet is a good source of lessons materials. Our team will do the rest. Contestants must be well rounded, good in number theory, combinatorics, geometry and algebra. Mastering only one area is not enough."

But Teng said, "It's all about balance. Contestants should be disciplined during training, not only because they are representing our country, but also because opportunities like the IMO are rare. Many students would love to be in their positions. But all the same time, contestants should enjoy the moment. It's important to create an environment that will allow them to be comfortable with each other. Contestants should not think of the IMO as a competition among themselves, but rather they should push each other to become better."

Chua agreed. "Never be afraid of difficult questions. Take the easiest one easily, but enjoy the process. After all, math is fun."

E-mail the author at blendead@gmail.com.

The importance of being useless

From page C1

Even Plato had poets exiled from his ideal Republic because they were liars and a colossal waste of breathing space.

In defense, Sir Philip Sydney, in 16th-century schoolboy prose style, argued that poets never said they were telling the truth and that Aristotle and Matthew Arnold proclaimed that culture is the cure of true civilization.

I happen to think that writing—and all art for that matter—is a soapbox, with which to get a glimpse of a life other than our own once in a while.

Sometimes I think we take for granted how large the world really is. We tend to think of ourselves as the protagonists of the movie of our life. The world is all about us, and without us the world just cannot exist.

Try imagining the world without you and you will find the same unwillingness to imagine that the space without you will keep on running in the same way after you die. The egos of surviving simply leave us to forget how many other protagonists there are in this world.

Different histories

The world's population is currently 6.6 billion. That's 6.6 billion different histories all together, each one with its own context, language, plot, twist and turn. Each one of these stories is existing at the blinking moment, where you tune his or her own drama underlining at that very moment. It just so happened that this time unit of his or her story has involved stepping into an elevator with you to an extent.

Each person has a story because the world is vexed and mystified to us in many different ways... and if you dig deep enough, you'll find that most of the stories are ever-boring, even if you've only made up the story just from the way the person looked. Even the most extraordinary of persons already tell that story of one other people.

None are all lesser than the world is bigger than us, but like infinity, the idea of it is too unreal for our minds to fully grasp. What the people who write more stories do is transform

THE AUTHOR (above, right) at the 2007 Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature with mom Grace and (left) with bro. Pio Rosca

that inert knowledge into felt awareness. The world is real, chaotic and painfully beautiful in its ugliness and splendor, and writers are people who try to find order in their chaos to produce something out which one finally recognizes.

And this is by no means an easy process. It's a challenge of choosing details, filling gaps, melding fact and fiction, getting what is in one's mind "out there"... accurately, getting boundaries, knowing when to stop.

Revealing the spectator

In the end, art does not so much reflect reality as it reveals the spectator. It shows us to either readers or writers—how very little we truly know. The final product is a kind of bravery borne in the crash of experience, in the realization of something new, in the appreciation of flaws, but first locked deep underneath, just like swimmers who know divers (theoretically) but come swim time, would sink."

"The Philippine ambassador in Vietnam lamented the education system in our country," Teng said. "Only three countries have basic education of less than 12 years, and we are one of them. If we are to make any significant progress, changes must be done, particularly in math."

"When Romania learned that its best students were not able to solve more than half of the problems during the 1959 IMO, its education ministry changed the curriculum of the science high schools towards deep thinking," Garces said. "And to-day, Chia is not losing ground. Our national high schools were college math, such as calculus, but the students cannot even prove basic math concepts. Their focus on computations rather than critical thinking. Lower college math to college, and concentrate on high school math to deepen understanding of the basics."

"The best winners for the IMO should be high school teachers. They teach the students five days a week. Though difficult, it is not impossible to have problem solving. I hope that the deputy leader in the future would come from a high school."

Big event

Chua said he was excited during the IMO, especially when he solved problem three, problem. In triangle ABC, the bisector of angle BAC intersects the circumscribed angle at R. the perpendicular bisector of AC at Q. The midpoint of BC is M and the midpoint of AC is L. Prove that the triangles RPE and RQL have the same area.

"The best problems solvers are all

From page C1

And she just couldn't . . .

I was a dexterous student then, and she wanted to read my comic book journals.

As a primary grade student, she'd come down the stairs at 6:30 a.m. to take her breakfast while holding a book. Gulping down the cereal with the spoon in her right hand, her left hand would turn the pages quite adeptly.

In our travels I found her, a toddler, sitting quietly on a quiet corner at the airport reading a book that she had prepared for the long wait. Every trip thereafter, she would have her suitcase filled among her books. She should keep herself from reading so she could ensure it for long flights.

While she enjoyed physical activities during travels, Lyra would also spend a lot of her travels at cultural sites. She trained herself reading texts of historical backgrounds and explanations of exhibits and supplements in art and science museums.

Gradually a bit precocious for a 5-year old but she was a shy little girl, absorbed in a world of words and stories. I learned that this childhood introversion is a characteristic of serious readers. She was all ears to the stories I told her at times. She listened intently to my garbled narrating legends of a country's regions. The real stories in "saga proportion" that her maternal aunts narrated also made for a rich dose of resources.

Rhyming and writing

When I first discovered that she was creating non-sense and sensible rhymes while lying on her bed, I placed a tape recorder near her bed. I gathered my pieces of scribbled notes that she wrote on the back of used pad paper when she was in grade school. She wouldn't hear of showing me of her "scribbles" to others, always saying they were nothing. But I noticed the rhymes and meters, parallelisms and compositions.

When she was in third grade, she was reading C.S. Lewis. At that age she already knew she wanted to be a writer. In the single-spaced letter to her Dad I'd been following copies of Tolkien's books and could not stop reading, dissecting and discussing the author with his Dad until she exhausted her thoughts on Tolkien for me (criticism) of Lewis, which I have found her a perfect grade of L.S.

In her late elementary and high school years she would keep spiral notebooks of her hand-written stories. She thought that she was ashamed to put in more current during every time, and before long her friends discovered the notebook and circulated it among the students—thus reading her all. Her classmates would ask her to write a "chapter" each day. She was content to live up to that expectation.

Unusual choices

Her favorite girls were literary characters and characters, books on the origins of words and languages, and anthologies of all genres of great writings—unusual choices for a kid, but she was actually reading them from page to page! She taught me that the words "cute" and "adorable" each day. She was content to live up to that expectation.

Visits to bookstores were the best treats of all. First, it was the rewarding reader's section of National Book Store, where I was in Nellie in the US (where we had to make a stop in every city), and further on, Kinokuniya for the wish list.

There came the first Potters. Books on Penny Wood to Mabel's, then Page One at Rockwell. Older changed to Fully Booked's. There was also Booksource on Orchard Road in Singapore, and beside City Hall in Sydney. Edits in Taiwan, and Page One in Times Square, Hong Kong, which sometimes got three visits a year from us.

The whole family became the books and corners of these places.

Crystal always chose her books well. She would start such a big hearth of books. My only rule was: three classics and three modern titles for each visit. From her path of some 20 books, she'd parallel. By elimination three of these values which could want, we borrowed to refund or would not let read against from at a young age, she could discuss degrees of literary excellence. Her book collection in her bedroom now spilling to our family room, makes for a library of excellent selections.

Winner twice over

Crystal went on to major in Anglo-American Literature at UP, graduating magna cum laude in 2005. After a stay in Beijing to complete a Mandarin certificate program, she went to University of New South Wales in Sydney for her BFA in Creative Writing and graduated with first class honors (summa). Incredibly, at 23, she teaches high school English in an international school in Hong Kong.

Her greatest joy these past two weeks have been to be informed that she was a winner in story competition: first prize for her poem "Gondola" in the University of New South Wales' literary journal Unnamment, and third prize in the Palanca Awards for her short story "Bento Sakana's Last Celebration"—her first attempt in this prestigious awarding body.

She said the reason for this brave attempt was that, since winning a Palanca would be something so unexpected, if she didn't have anything ideal her entry, she wouldn't feel disappointed. The day after the awards night, on our way to the airport, she reflected with a smile: "I thought a Palanca would be something I'll get when I am old and gray."

E-mail the author at grace@ateneo.edu

ROOTS AND WINGS
Cathy Babao-Gabuelo

Dengue and rainy-day diseases

Prevention is still the best solution

TOGETHER WITH THE RAINS COME dreaded childhood diseases such as pneumonia and dengue—illnesses that strike not only children but adults as well.

Our good friend, Cris Perino, the editor of Homeworld, is still in the Medical City (MC) as of this morning, due to a bad bout with dengue. Unfortunately, it was not only Cris, but his three daughters as well who got sick; two of them landed in the ICU for a few days, due to the same illness. Only his wife, Beth, was spared from dengue but you can imagine the insights her mind levels keeping watch over three daughters and a husband. It's a good thing that our home church, Greenhills Christian Fellowship, threw in their full moral and spiritual support and thankfully, all of them are on the way to recovery.

Yesterday I was at our pediatrician's clinic and noted that there were a higher number of patients waiting in line. Dr. Joseph Regalado, who has been taking care of my children for the last 12 years, confirmed that there were an increase in the number of dengue, upper respiratory ailments and pneumonia patients over the last month or so. This was also confirmed to me by Dr. Cynthia Arce who chairs the school health program of the Philippine Pediatrics Society and the Department of Pediatrics at the Medical Center. She also told me that when she was in Bacolod last week, she noted that there were a high number of dengue cases being reported.

Pneumonia is a lung infection that can be caused by different types of germs, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. Although different types of pneumonia tend to affect children in different age groups, pneumonia is most commonly caused by viruses. Pneumonia hospitalizes symptoms of pneumonia might after two or three days of a cold or sore throat.

The incubation period for pneumonia varies, depending on the type of virus or bacteria causing the infection. Some common incubation periods are: respiratory syncytial virus, 4 to 6 days; influenza, 18 to 72 hours.

With treatment, most types of bacterial pneumonia can be cured within 1 to 2 weeks. Viral pneumonia may last longer. Mycoplasmal pneumonia may take two to three weeks to resolve completely.

The viruses and bacteria that cause pneumonias are contagious and are usually found in fluid from the mouth or nose of an infected person. Illness can spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes on a person, by sharing drinking glasses and eating utensils, and when a person touches the used tissues or handkerchiefs of an infected person.

Dr. Arce suggests the following preventive measures to avoid pneumonia during the rainy season:

"Avoid crowded places such as malls. Infants and young children are especially prone to contracting airborne diseases. As much as possible avoid bringing your children to crowded areas unless necessary.

"Practice hand-washing as frequently as possible to avoid hand to mouth transmission of germs. Carry a hand sanitizer in your bag.

"Remind all family members about the practice of covering one's mouth when coughing or sneezing.

"Refrain from eating junk food and juices as these can irritate the bacteria present in the throat.

"Drink plenty of water, at least 6-10 glasses a day and take adequate amounts of vitamin C. Get enough sleep and rest to keep your immune system up. Take your vitamins daily."

No joking matter

Dengue fever on the other hand is a life-like illness that is spread by the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito.

Dengue is no joking matter and every year, around the time all the way until January of February, parents need to be very conscious of the disease and take precautions to prevent the mosquito from visiting their homes.

School administrators need to be aware of the number of dengue cases that hit their schools population. Schools with communities taken over campus should be more vigilant about hygiene measures so that their students are adequately protected.

I came across a highly informative brochure on Dengue, produced by Ilaw Center for Social Responsibility, if done often the onset of Dengue fever is striking suddenly with a high fever, rash, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pains.

Nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite are common symptoms. A rash usually appears three to four days after the start of the fever. Anyone who is bitten by an infected mosquito can get dengue fever.

Risk factors of dengue hemorrhagic fever include a person's age and immune status, as well as the strain of the virus.

Once a person is infected with one or more types of the virus one is at greater risk for developing severe dengue hemorrhagic fever if infected again.

There are no vaccines as of yet and the key preventive measure is to eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

Remember that the Aedes mosquito lives and breeds in clean, stagnant water. Observe the following preventive measures:

- Regularly inspect your surroundings and discard items that can collect rain or run-off water – old tires, plant pots, tool gutters, plants with very huge leaves, items that contain water should be covered at all times. Regularly change water in outdoor bird baths and pet and animal containers.
- Use mosquito repellants. OFF mosquito repellant now has several variants, one to suit every need. Johnson and Johnson also have a product that is safe for infant skin. Cebu discovered an all-natural repellent available at CEBA store at Tumbaobao that protects just as well. Spray or rub the repellant on your skin and clothes.
- Burn citronella or eucalyptus oil in an aromatherapy burner to ward off these pesky mosquitoes and other pests.
- While outdoors, during times that mosquitoes bite—from 7 to 8 a.m. and from 4 to 6 p.m.—wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- If you experience any of the dengue symptoms, report them to your doctor right away.

Be extra vigilant during the wet season. We always better to be safe than sorry.

Email the author at cathybabao@gmail.com

Good read for first-time parents

BABY MAGAZINE'S September issue focuses on first-time parenting. Preparing for your first baby becomes easier with checklists on essentials, articles on sugar or fabric and interviews from husbands and dads about their baleful trip to the hospital, with tips for first-timers on how to make the trip go more smoothly.

There's also a feature on understanding infants and how to make it a win-win situation when your sponsor's parents seem to be taking over your life.

Other topics covered in the latest issue of Baby are fun mom-baby bonding activities, dealing with a toddler during the terrible twos, natural feeding methods for kids' diarrhea and vomiting, weights on keeping a child active when one of the parents is away, and tips on making and following a family budget.

Feature stories include the fascinating waterbirth experience of Arlene Rosita, the first successful somersaulting preemie at Asian Hospital and Medical Center and the first recorded hospital waterbirth case in the country.

In the pregnancy pages, discover solutions to a sagging self-image during pregnancy and ways to encourage greater involvement from your husband during those months before delivery.

Baby magazine is available nationwide at National Bookstore, SM Department Store baby section, Baby & Co., Babyland, Power Books, Ballet and selected Mercury Drug outlets. CAT/TRINETA SB.

Express delivery for students

DHL, THE WORLD'S LEADING express and logistics company, has launched DHL Student Express, a new express delivery service designed exclusively for students who plan to study overseas.

DHL Student Express is a fast and reliable retail express service that facilitates the transport of school application forms, transcripts of records and other important school documents. Students can also send gifts and items such as books and clothing may also be sent to school dormitories through Student Express.

DHL Student Express will service the huge number of Filipino students who aspire to continue their studies abroad. Over 1.6 million students from source countries (SCEE), including the Philippines, apply to universities of destination countries.

Some of the popular destinations include the USA, United Kingdom, Australia, France, Canada, Japan, Germany, Spain, New Zealand, Singapore, India, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Switzerland.

Students who use DHL Student Express will enjoy a 15-percent discount with every transaction. Student Express is available in document and package categories. Student Express documents may either weigh up to 0.5 kg, while the Student Express Package ranges 2.5-5 kg.

Shipments are monitored by real-time online tracking and shippers notified of deliveries via short messaging service (SMS). Clients can also call a 24-hour customer service hotline for delivery inquiries.

DHL Student Express deliveries are marked with a cost of DHL premium handling through the Student Express sticker.

CHING Montanio, Harry Tiesen, Rupert Jacinto, Tricia Lee and National Artist Arturo Luz

ABSCAN CUTTING Andy Romero, Sandy Pelchat, Simon Crayon, Ambassador Ryo Yamazaki, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay Jacinto, Marlen Vazquez, David Lim and Tina Jacinto

CONVOS Agnes Habacon, Bobbie Romualdez and Tina Jacinto

Passion and the search for happiness

ALEXI Alonso and Muriel Santos

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS is a lifelong search. The journey is made worthwhile by memorable experiences and friendships made along the way. Many in this issue, those who find enlightenment often agree that the challenge is not about acquiring the most assets but about finding passion in everyday life.

And it is in what we are passionate about that each one of us differs. Take world-class photographer **Rupert Jacinto**, whose new passion is mixed-media photography. At his well-attended cocktail reception at the St. Francis Shangri-La Hotel, his "Savour Art" exhibit presented Jacinto's mural artworks in photographs, computer graphics on canvas and acrylic painting. The exhibit also featured the dazzling debut installations of **Jaime Honrado Lerma**.

The guest of honor, Ambassador **Ryo Yamazaki** of Japan, was all passion in his glowing remarks and invited Rupert to exhibit in Japan. This lovable man, forsaken a headed back home in his home town for love, promised to keep close ties with his Filipino friends.

Hours after the ribbon-cutting ceremonies with the other guests of honor like **Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay** and Shangri-La Hotel chief **Sandy Romero**, the Jacinto artworks were cuffed off to new lucky winners.

The art-loving guests enjoyed wine provided by **The Table** of Texas and a buffet spread by master caterer of Cil Chavez Cuisine. Major sponsors were St. Francis Shangri-La Place, Kraus Cuisine and Bubbles Inc. The event was promoted in cooperation with Rotex Manila and Filendex Group Foam.

TOURIST Andrew and Vicki Cynthia Carrion

NET CASALDI and Jaime Bautista

HSBC card

To the unenlightened like us, happiness equals shopping, and there is nothing like the HSBC Mabuhay Visa to assist in this pursuit. HSBC recently launched the new FanFlights features of their credit card to further sweeten the package (call 811-888 or visit www.hsbc.com.ph).

According to HSBC's SVP for marketing and product development, **Satoshi Suzuki**, cardholders can now buy miles online with their HSBC Mabuhay Miles Visa, which helps them earn even more miles. And from now until Nov. 30, cardholders get two miles for the price of one. It may not be the path to enlightenment, but sure is tempting!

At the HSBC Card's Zen-filled launch at the Rafael Room of Shangri-La Makati, famous resa guide and event host **Carlos Celdran** urged guests to earn miles by taking the Pesonli Challenges and everyone happily rose to the occasion.

Fashion model-actress Cynthia Carreon paddled a canoe in the Cagayan de Oro setting while determined designer Bajo Laurel hiked back and forth on the bike trail in the Camiguin fire area. His image of travel from the rain forest to the mountains and into the hotel was a fine ticket to the local destination of his choice.

Attending the winners were HSBC's former and deputy CEO **Martin Cook**, as well as Philippines Managing president **Jaime Bautista** and VP for marketing **Julie Ann**. The festivities rolled on enough raffle prizes to money that a good many in the crowd would be assisted in their journey toward enlightenment. The grand raffle prize was a ticket to Hong Kong, won by a very enlightened guy Igor Cruz.

Avatar

My own HSBC card has been heavily swiped at the recent show of Greenbelt 5 event partners, such as the event co-hosts for **Bench Gamboa**'s Avatar and the opening of funky, self-named designer **Kate Bautista**'s new shop. Both Kate and Bench hail from Cebu and the island's creativity is truly showcased at their CBD outlets.

The very bubbly Bench has the most lovably womanly fashion accessories, so my friend, for a few bucks more, sports his creations are heavily dress. With stores opening at UBE, thanks to him and his friends partner Mia Hontiveros. I no longer have to trek to Cebu to see the pieces from his latest collections. Pass the seconds on what my best friends!

Negros trade fair

Speaking of creativity from northern Negros, the 32nd Negros Trade Fair is coming soon! The edition will be held at the Rockwell Tent on Oct. 3-8. The Land of Sugar now promises sweeter-looking products. Ma. Francisca and Konstantinos, gifts and housewares, fashion and accessories. The second fair has also lots of food delicacies that are the envies of our tastes.

JEYNE'S Grill owners Jeyne, Joanna and Quennie Lazard with friends Jenny and Edward Chua, and Isabel Bernabotus

IMPRESSIVE entrance at Jeyne's Grill

My passion is chocolate, but I can't indulge in it nowadays since it's reportedly bad for the voice, and I must keep whatever little voice I have for my, ahem, singing stint on TV

TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

ADRIANO Castelo with dancing beauty Shiran Lee

MEGNOS Trade Fair girls Reena Pete, Ate Gaston and Mary Ann Colemares

MAGCOR chair Efraim Genuino and wife Mrs. Fields' owners Sheryl and Gumaya Sua

PAZZO gathering create owner Ate Lena

HSBC PR ladies Johanna Garcia and Cat Manese

SALA owners Gino Angeles and Cedric Mackay

BRAM ring instructor Tristan Chua and Sonya Parmenter

CEBU beauty Anapatricia Zuellas and Cebu designer Jun Rosario

Thanks to Mrs. Field's

My own greatest passion in food is for chocolate. Unfortunately, Tre loves told that chocolate is bad for the throat, so I am not indulging these days as I am preserving what little voice I have for my vocation, and what my CMO, "Celebrity Trash."

It's a good thing I was able to eat lots of Mrs. Field's chocolate-chip cookies and fudge brownies weeks ago when they opened the Mrs. Fields Cookies at the cinema level of the super gigantic Trilleon Mall. The new café is a chocolate lovers' dreams, and also offers birthday cakes, coffee and yummy gelato icecream.

For those days when one needs an extra dose of happiness, head to Mrs. Field's and get that happy smile on your face! It's one of the best things to find on life's journey: instant enlightenment.

E-mail the author at tessa@manila@inquirer.com.ph.

AVAVAN treats Butch Carlengas and Mia Hontiveros

JEYNE'S Grill owners Arturo Lorenzo and Alex Pérez

TIMEVALUE Magazine editor Liza Cuenca, Lorraine Bolisencio and Illiana Montalbano

PAL VP for marketing Pole Cruz, HSBC Deputy CEO Martin Cook and Brenda Hunter

MRS. FIELDS' guests Jeanne Yeo, Lady Imelda Marcos with Lolita Carpio and Tayo Pascual

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

Sabah: So like and unlike home

STORY ON PAGE 6

Elevating Lifestyle the TREi Way

You want it?

We can make it happen.

TREI

SUITERIE Harbour Room I's 104-feet-h Pitches

MEDALLAN SUITERIA, the oldest hotel building of the Sutera Harbour Resort, is named after the famous Portuguese explorer

SUNRISE at Pacific Resort Kalundanan, another world-class resort

Sabah: So like and unlike home

Text and photos by Joel P. Nigos

SABAH'S HISTORical links and proximity to the Philippines make it a familiar name to Filipinos.

Though not yet a popular destination for Filipino travelers, it has become a land of opportunity for people looking for overseas work.

Hundreds of Filipinos travel to Sabah via the nation's backdoor, banking livelihood there or permanent residence.

In Sabah, a Filipino village is not a rarity, often consisting of houses by the river or on stilts. In the heart of the city is what is known as a Filipino market, not very different from Divisoria or Cubao.

Filipinos are all over the place—from managers or staff members of various establishments and, of course, to hands playing in hotels and restaurants.

The second largest of Malaysia's 13 states, Sabah is on Borneo, the world's third largest island, and is very near Asia. Only about a fourth of the Philippines in size, Sabah already has more than two million tourists a year.

It has world-class hotels and resorts as well as bed and breakfast establishments. Mount Kinabalu, the tallest in Southeast Asia at 4,095 meters, looms over the city. Brought it to often shrouded in mist and clouds.

Sabah has assumed its capital, Kota Kinabalu, after the majestic peak, in reference to the mountain. Kota, by the way, means city.

Until the mid-15th century, Sabah was under the Sultan of Sulu and Brunei. In 1881, the British North Borneo Chartered Company was set up to rule North Borneo. It administered Sabah until 1942 when the Japanese invaded.

After World War II, the British returned and made Sabah a Crown Colony. In 1963, Sabah gained her independence and joined the Federation of Malaysia.

Scenic countryside

A tour of Sabah's countryside will make you feel like you have not left home. The scenery is very similar to the Philippines' rural areas, save for satellite dishes for television broadcast reception and Internet and phone cables.

Coconut trees and lush greenery line the long and seemingly never-ending road. Houses are for most, with large windows often made of capiz. They are supported by sturdy, long wooden poles allowing for strong winds when hurricanes are fusing or when locals keep produce and other items.

It is easy to confuse the locals with Filipinos, since both belong to the Malay race. Even their language has many words similar to Tagalog.

The beautiful and scenic Gaya Street provides an exciting introduction to ethno-water rafting. Riding down the riotous, over grade rapids, one passes

ABOVE, view of Nexus Resort Karambunai

> Filipinos are all over the place as managers or staff members of various establishments and, of course, to hands

THE KOTA Kinabalu City Mosque has similar features to the Hubert Mosque in Medina. Built in 1997 at 12ha in Bay near the sea, its interior hall can accommodate up to 13,000 people.

MOUNT KINABALU, the highest peak in Southeast Asian 4,095 meters, is often shrouded in mist and cloud. (AFP)

both green jungles and Dusun orchards and villages. Riders cross the river through a hanging bridge.

At Klias Wetland, a Bruneian Malay village, one finds wildlife like the endemic long-nosed proboscis monkey and various species of birds on a mangrove-lined river. It is by those canals of Kuching.

Kinabalu Park at the foot of Mount Kinabalu at Malaysia's first World Heritage site. Much of Sabah's mountain rainforest covers can be found here. One does not need challenge skills to scale the jagged granite peaks of the mountain, but only has to be fit. It takes at least two days to complete the hike.

The Poring Hot Spring in Ranau has open-air Japanese-style baths, to cultivate many reputed to have properties to cure skin problems. A trek through the rainforest with at least 100-foot canopies reveals life on treetops.

Highlights of the city tour include the Tun Mustapha Building, Sabah Museum, University Malaysia Sabah, Atkok State Mosque and City Mosque, and Sacred Heart Cathedral.

SUSPENDED at 137 feet above, the canopy walk was once used by scientists to do research on Sabah's rainforest and rainforest.

World-class

The impressive sky limits of world-class resorts like the luxury Kinabalu Cascades at Nexus Resort Kelly comprised over, it sits on 384 acres of glorious seafront property and consists of the Pacific Suites and Pinnacles Suites hotels with a combined 186 guest rooms and suites.

Nexus Resort Karambunai, another world-class resort, occupies 1,335 acres of natural and landscaped surroundings. The Karambunai Beach includes the South China Sea and has six lagoons, all private white-sand beaches and a million-year-old tropical rainforest.

Sabah also has two Shangri-La resort hotels: Shangri-La Tanjung Aru and Shangri-La Rasa Ria.

Getting to Sabah is easy. One can fly from Manila or Cebu by Malaysian Airlines and Asian Spirit by Air Asia, which offers cheap air fares all year round.

The trip to Sabah, Malaysia, was made possible by the Sabah Tourism Board, Malaysian Airlines and Outdoorsmen Unlimited. For more information on the tour operator arranging outbound flights worldwide, call 8984432 or 8984733.

E-mail the author at joelpnigos@yahoo.com.ph.

Travel Briefs

DOT asks local gov'ts to work together for tourism

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano appealed to the Department of Tourism's support for local governments that would like to develop and promote their areas as tourist destinations. He made the announcement together with Philippine Travel Mart recently held at the Megalobal Intl. Still Megamall. The event showcased the top attractions, indigenous crafts and culture of the country's 16 regions. Dubbed as the Talong Bayanihan mission, an MOU will be received special gifts and discounts from participating airlines and tour operators.

Religious pilgrimage

A pilgrimage to some religious sites in Europe has been organized by author Visita-cion "Chit" dela Torre. In Fatima, Portugal, the group will visit the Our Lady of Fatima Basilica, tombs of Francisco and Jacinta, and watch a candlelight procession. In Spain, the trip shall include a visit to the tomb of St. James at Santiago de Compostela, St. Theresa of Avila, shrine of Manresa and Valencia. From there, the group moves to Montserrat, Barcelona and Zaragoza, site of Basilica of the Lady of the Pillar. In Lourdes, France, it will visit the Grotto of St. Bernadette. From London, the group proceeds to Nice, Genoa, Pisa and Assisi, Italy. At Assisi, the group from the Basilica of St. Francis, Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli, and Portiuncula can gather and "Sanctis Dei Salutantes" (A Prayer of Assisi died. The journey ends in Rome, site where the participants will have an audience with Pope Benedict XVI at St. Peter's Square. Also to be visited are the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, San Giovanni in Laterano Church, Santa Santa Maria Maggiore, St. Paul's outside the Walls Church and a tour of Three Fountains. Fr. Gerry Tupaldo is the group's pilgrimage chaplain. Call 8184808 or 8160025 e-mail chitdelatorre@yahoo.com.

New airline destination

South East Asian Airlines (Seair) has announced flights to Puerto Princesa City, the province's capital, effective November 15. From Cebu every Monday and Thursday. The Cebu-Puerto Princesa route is in line with the Mindanao-based airline's expansion plans for this year. After opening a regional hub in Zamboanga City in 2006, Seair launches its Antique-Tawi-Tawi on a daily basis and to Jolo and Tawi-Tawi on a daily basis and to Jolo and Tawi-Tawi every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Present for the inaugural flight at the Puerto Princesa Airport were President Macapagal-Arroyo and Tourism Secretary Joe Durano. Call Seair Manila at 8490900, Cebu at 932-5444/8878, and Pagadian at 883-2108/831 or 30.

FIRST-CLASS AMENITIES

The Amorita Beach Resort on Panglao Island in Bohol offers first-class amenities and services. Guests can enjoy the infinity swimming pool, a pub-in-bar and an all-day restaurant, in addition to the beach. A wellness spa and a dive shop with open water. Amorita's facilities are designed to meet every guest's needs. It has spacious function rooms, honeymoon rooms and private villas with plunge pools. Call 9140381, e-mail inquiries@amoritaresort.com or visit www.amoritaresort.com.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

CARAIG-ANG GORDONCENG

Shaylesia Pajelan Caraig, son of Pilar Le Pajelan, and recently Jaro Lou Pajelan to Ang Gordoncenig, daughter of Andres and Victoria Ang Gordoncenig at the majestic Christian Church. Reception was held at The Spanish Hacienda—the premiere events venue in Dumaguete City.

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and group snapshot along with a phone of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the business, PO. Box 2000 Makati Central Post office 1260 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required. If the wedding has already taken place, announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.

WONG-FELIPINO

David Wong, son of **Peong Nieng Pang** and **Yuk Chee**, will wed **Jacqueline Felipino**, daughter of **Lim Gok Seng Filipino** and **Peong B. Hay** on Sept. 23 at the United Evangelical Church of The Philippines. Reception will be held at Dalgoni Imin Seafood Restaurant.

AMEN-CELAJE

Maria Graciella J. Amin, M.D., daughter of Mr. **Manuel S. Amin** (deceased) and Mrs. **Barbara J. Amin**, is set this year to wed **Josel C. Celaje**, IV, M.D., son of Dr. **Jose M. Celaje** and Mrs. **Perla C. Celaje**, on Sept. 8 at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine, New Manila, Quezon City. The bride will be wearing a gown of her own design, with the help of stylist **Bernardo Chan**.

SANTOS-PANCHO

Jose Dominic Santos will wed **Arabella Pancho** on Sept. 28, 4 p.m. at the Jose Interjay Church. Reception will be held at Dot Esplanade.

GABOR-RAMOS

Julius Gustavi Gabor, son of Joseyn Gonzalez and Amalia Gabor (deceased), will wed **Liezel Sarmiento Ramos**, daughter of **Divino** (deceased) and **Yolanda Ramos** on Sept. 22, 4:30 p.m. in (CHECK) ceremony at Leslie's Garden.

Storywriting contest

ADOBO VIDEO PRODUCTION is holding the "My (Funny) Love Affair" story-writing contest.

The competition is part of the "Mixed things... Get hot... Go!!!" bridal fair, now on its fifth year, on Oct. 13-14 at the Boulevard Hotel.

Soon-to-wed can write down unforgettable moments with their future husband/wife. The story has to be interesting and should have the "ishy" factor.

It should also be true.

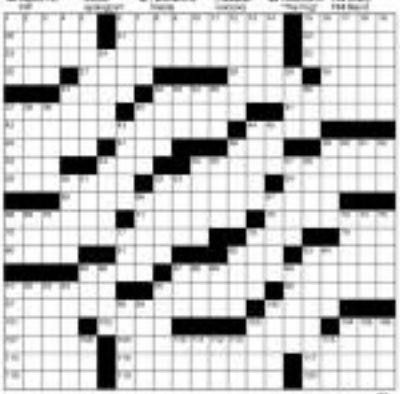
Participants should have their wedding date Oct. 13, 2007-Oct. 13, 2008 and must be able to prove it in one way or another.

Entries should be e-mailed to myloveaffair@mixedthings.biz. Deadline for submission of entries is Oct. 10.

Cash prizes and gift certificates from sponsors and event partners are at stake. (540-6607, text 0918-3222218, www.mixedthings.biz)

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — **BIRD PLAY**



answer on page E3

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Barcong

Patroness of Vietnamese Christians

The devotion to Our Lady of La Vang, named after a fern that grows in central Vietnam, has spread with pilgrims from all over the world visiting her shrine in what is now Quang Tri City

LA VANG IS A FERN THAT GROWS DEEP in the forest in central Vietnam where the Virgin Mary was said to have appeared in 1798 to Vietnamese Christians when they were being persecuted.

Presenting herself as the Mother of God, she reassured and advised the people to use the leaves of the fern to treat ailments. She promised to help them.

The devotion to Our Lady of La Vang has spread. Pilgrims from all over the world visit her shrine in what is now Quang Tri City.

The church was consecrated in 1928 in the presence of 20,000 pilgrims. It was elevated by Pope John XXIII to a basilica minore in 1962 but was destroyed in 1972 during the Vietnam war. After it was rebuilt, it became the Basilica of La Vang.

In 1988, Pope John Paul II canonized the 117 Vietnamese Martyrs in the basilica. The 200th anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady of La Vang was celebrated that same year.

To go to La Vang, call Marians de la Paz, 715-5202, Tuesday. Travel Mart, or e-mail marians@pinoydeveloper.com.

Kanta Misa

Nelly Silvestre said Aug. 22, feast of the Queenship of Mary, was special for Fr. Bernie O. Diaz, CSC, because he debuted in the world of Tagalog religious music.

The official launch of his "Kanta Misa," a song book for choir and congregation/community, was highlighted by a solemn Mass officiated by Provincial Visitor Fr. Bienvenido Diaz, CSC, and concelebrated with Fr. Ignacio Ibarra, parish priest of San Vicente de Paul Church, together with at least 15 Vincentian priests.

A short program hosted by Fr. Raymond Regan followed. Fr. Bernie's mentor, the Daniel Del Mar of Filipino Music, Manolo Alfredo Sacramento, gave an engaging talk on his continuing musical journey encouraging his wonderful gift of humor.

Fr. Randy Agnes, CSC, delivered a very informative talk that underscored the role of liturgical music today. Emotionally overwhelmed, the unassuming Fr. Bernie was warm and welcoming in his response.

Fr. Bernie's versatility and unique sensitivity as a promising young songwriter shone through as the five Isabel Choir, under the baton of Maribel Miguel, sang the melodious and uplifting "Tayo na sa Dangyan", the well-articulated "Pagbalatdog", the lyrical and poetic "Bukas Ko'y Lamit", the dramatic and brilliantly arranged "Ama Namin", the divine, soulful and stirring "Ako Ginoong Maria", and the gleeful, caroling and festive "San Vicente, Ikinapa ng Diyos."

Each composition was an inspiring and meaningful musical piece.

Copies of the songbook are now available at the St. Vincent de Paul religious store.

Prayer companion

"Struggle from the Heart ... A Prayer Companion" authored by Mer Fr. Mario Jose C. Labra of the Diocese of Infanta is a personal collection of prayers that, over the years, had been his source of comfort and solace during his moments of difficulties, trials and crisis.

Fr. Mac invites everyone to say at least one prayer that generates a great loving faith to start a journey of blessing and healing.

The book will be launched today at the San Lorenzo Ruiz Church in Pleasant Hill Subdivision, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan on the feast of its patron saint, San Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila.

Another launch will be held at 6 p.m., Sept. 28, at St. Paul's Bookstore in SM Megamall. Copies of the book are available at all St. Paul outlets nationwide at a very affordable price. The book will be a beautiful gift for Christmas and other special occasions.

Hermandad

It started as an online photo-sharing group with Hank Anthony Calderon, Fran-cis Cayas (who are both in North America) and Jo Rosas Catubro as administrators.

Since they shared a common interest in Holy Week images, processions and other Lenten practices, they called the group "Mahal na Araw: Kilala at Banata." Some three months later, the group has more than 300 members.

On Sept. 23, the Hermandad de la Sagrada Pasion will be formally launched as an organization. Members of the board include Stefan Hanes, Clifford Cinco, Jorge Al-fau, Gregory and Dennis Montalla. Or. Candaveco presidents.

The event will coincide with the Encuentro El as he held in Casita de San Jose, Bulacan. Highlights of the meeting include a Mass, veneration of relics of the cross and a mini exhibit of crosses and crucifixes. Those who like to join the festivities but can not call 0917 6775195. The exhibit will feature a replica of the famous Holy Cross of Mayapag and Basan.

Monastic vocation

Dan Martin de Jesus Icomec, OSB, said the monastic vocation seminar I never about in 1997 attracted many aspirants. One remained to become a monk and a priest.

Another monastic vocation talk will be held 9 a.m., Oct. 6, at Pope Pius XII Catholic Center 120 Ave., Pasay, Manila. Text 0917 5.916586 or 0927 9302884. Fr. Peter Xavier Aeonsan and Dom Martin are speakers.

Forum

Jane Rambles will speak during a Wa-Life Philippines forum 8 a.m.-12 noon, Sept. 29, at the Good Shepherd Convent, 1043 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City.

Seminar

A Marian encounter seminar will be held today at the Mariona Retreat house, 926 Bannawe St. cor. Sta. Rosa near Del Monte Inc., Quezon City. Call Sis. Luz, 7408729 or Sis. Cherry 2314074.

Trip

Msgr. Jerome Reyes of Rosario Church will lead pilgrims to the Holy Land, Egypt and Jordan Oct. 17-29. Call Adam's Travel at 322.3611/321.1698.

September is thanksgiving month for me. I celebrated my birthday on Sept. 19 and my book "Purely Personal Book of Miracles" marked its first anniversary on Sept. 8. By God's grace, my book is a bestseller at National Book Store.

San Lorenzo Ruiz

The Basilica Minore of San Lorenzo Ruiz in Dimasalo will hold a procession at 4 p.m., Sept. 28, around the district. Cardinal-Cardinal Rosales will officiate in the Concelebrated Mass at 5:30 p.m.

Our Lady of La Vang

Fr. Bernie Diaz, CM, composer of "Kanta Misa"

EMILY'S POST
Emily Marcelo

Is it time to say goodbye?

DEAR EMILY

I met Ann in 2001. We worked in the same campus ministry.

It all started when he was asked by our superior to help me with my project. He was very kind and sweet.

After the project was finished, we still were out together. We really enjoyed each other's company.

The only problem was I was married and already had a daughter while he was engaged to be married.

His wedding was held as planned while I had a second baby.

But that did not stop us.

Everyone in the office understood our growing closeness. They even tried assigning us to different territories. But still that did not stop us.

The more they tried to separate us, the more we wanted to be together.

It has already been six years. But our love for each other has grown even stronger. We both left the company and cherished to work abroad instead. We are now working here in South America, away from our respective families, enjoying each day we are together.

I do not know how long this will last, but I really hope it does. I love him so much and I do not think I can ever live without him.

Our project here will be finished in a few weeks. I will be transferred to another city, while he will be transferred to another country. Just the thought of our being separated again hurts so badly.

Is this love worth fighting for? Is there really hope for us? How can something that feels so good, be so wrong?

CHERRY

You asked how long "this" would last, and said you "really hope" it would. You followed it up by saying you did not think you "could ever live without him."

What are you really trying to say? Do you or do you not intend to end this affair?

If you end this affair and go back to your respective spouses, he sure that there will be no pining, no regrets, no looking back.

You must focus on the road ahead and rebuild the lives you both abandoned six years ago.

However, if going back to your families will only bring you and your boyfriend misery and unhappiness and eventually strengthen further your love for each other—then, that is worse than leaving these innocent people in the first place.

There is no use going back to your families when there is really nothing to go back to. Give both of your spouses a new lease on life—the freedom to find his/her own happiness, without you and your baggage hanging around.

It is unfair—it is unkind (to you and live the life you want to) and love—forever and ever—and make a clear break of everything.

Do it if the two of you feel that way—truly and sincerely.

Although already of this guilt-tripping. Face up to the truth—and... you know the rest.

E-mail the author at chserve_ltd@inquirer.com.ph. Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to Inquirer Visit www.pdi.com.ph and listen to Ms Marcelo at Monday-Friday, on dzBB 594.5 FM.

GRAND Ballroom of the Marco Polo Plaza Cebu

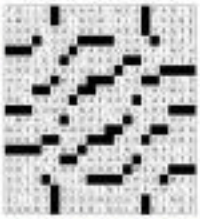
Debutante's ball in Cebu

THE CEBU GRAND DEBUTANTE'S BALL, envisioned to be city's most dazzling social event, will be held on Oct. 20, at the Grand Ballroom of Marco Polo Plaza Cebu, the premier luxury destination in the Queen City of the South.

Organized in cooperation with the Pueblo Council of Cebu, the ball will introduce the most exquisite and beautiful debutantes to Cebu society, handpicked by dynamic designers Albert Krilla, Jun Escario, Amy Gorgonio, DJ Nodo, Philip Rodriguez, Cary Santiago, Pedic Pe and Mitzie Ventenilla.

Call (032) 253-1111.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



The Assumption Bazaar 2007

SUNDAY
September 30, 2007
9:00 am - 7:00 pm
Hotel Intercontinental
Makati City

For the benefit of Assumption Charities

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Proven. Fun. Exciting.
SCHOLASTIC

A world of best buys at the one-stop home store

Home furnishings galore are up for grabs at SM Homeworld's storewide sale starting today until September 30. Savvy shoppers are invited to take advantage of the big savings and exciting deals lined up for the Home Sale.

A wide variety of items, including plasticware, glassware, kitchenware, linen, décor and furniture are pegged at up to 50% off, while others are offered at special prices.

One-color home setup Early bird shoppers can hit Homeworld's flagship store in the Mega

So many more in store!

In addition to the September sale items, SM Homeworld showrooms so many other choices that you can take home at amazingly affordable regular prices.

FURNITURE

top trends, latest looks

Go contemporary with the latest fabric and leather sofa collections. Accent tables, étagères and consoles in gleaming glass and chrome also abound.

DECOR

time for a new look

Style match your home decorating with good-looking choices that include wall and photo frames, and assorted flowers.

TABLEWARE

tableware for all occasions

Setting the table for everyday dining? Or weekend entertaining? SM Homeworld's dinnerware and glassware collections are designed to help you achieve a well-appointed table setting. Any time, any day of the week!

BATH

inspired buys for bath sanctuaries

Stock up on great-looking bath essentials at SM Homeworld's Linen Section showcasing an impressive collection of trendy shower curtains, bath towels, and more.

KITCHENWARE

efficient cookery essentials for the home chef

Experience the joy of making up-you-prepare your favorite dishes in quality cookware that do not stick, do not tarnish, and do not waste energy.

PLASTICWARE

big ideas for small spaces

Enjoy huge savings and extra values on great selections of food keepers, storage boxes and organizers.

Christmas is just around the corner

... and September is the perfect time to start giving your home that festive seasonal update.

Get a headstart on your holiday decorating. Visit SM Homeworld for the latest trends and hottest buys.

And, with the store's September sale event just beginning, go ahead and stock up on everyday accessories, particularly those tagged at low, low price levels.

HOME WORLD

home sale

now thru september 30

as much as 50% OFF on great selections

PRESTIGE

CERAMIC BOWLS

SPECIALS P100.00

FAMILY HOME

DRAGO

TAKE 15% OFF P4,295.00

LE CREUSET

Less 10% P1,395.00

GLASS TUMBLERS

Buy One Take One

SPECIALS P28.00

LUMINARC

Save 30%

SALE

SPECIALS P13,950.00

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20 - 50% OFF

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Sunday LIFESTYLE at HOME

THOUGH music is his passion, Ramos appreciates the occasional silence and does not overdose on anything while driving.

DJ's Zen retreat

A JAPANESE warrior's full regalia has pride of place.

Though almost a fixture in the club scene, Anton Ramos retreats to his sanctuary when not playing music to partyphiles

Text by Linda B. Bulido
Photos by Jon Gaius Paredes

UPON HEARING HIS FIRST music album when he was 12 years old, Anton Ramos was hooked. Music was the rage and so his collection was filled with the dance music of the era.

By the time he was in high school, he was doing the party scene not as a newbie but as the guy playing the music the crowd could dance to.

Early on, he says, his father told him to "find your passion." Some 20 years and about 5,000 rides later—give or take a few CDs—the passion has not cooled but burns as hot and bright as ever.

The boy comes full circle, collecting and playing dance music once again as he does gigs as a disc jockey for one of the hottest clubs in town at least one day a week. Friends also occasionally invite him to do the music-mixing magic out of town.

Not surprisingly, he is in charge of the family's music-surrounds.

The all-encompassing love for music even dictates Ramos' (interior) whats he needs. The music dominates the home the modelling crowd are not for the 30-something Ramos. He would rather go to more cosmopolitan destinations because he likes "to shop."

But you will not find him checking out the latest fashion for men. Rather he haunts only stores searching for his kind of music. These days that means electronics, for this former radio DJ turned club DJ.

Stock trader

Had it you think Ramos' life is one big party a night of bar-hopping fueling into another evening of merrymaking, his day job should tell you otherwise. Away from the club scene, he has one of what many people consider as a very staid occupation.

Ramos is a licensed stockbroker, hogging his reliable laptop everywhere he goes as he can keep track of the action at the Philippine Stock Exchange.

His three-bedroom flat in Serra his oasis for silence after nights of "music." Ramos says, "Quiet moments are very important" as with the help of stylist Rusby Cuna, a family friend, he has created a Zen sanctuary for himself—quiet, neat, contemporary, cocktail-toned and very low-key—not at all the kind you would expect from someone who is a regular in the party circuit.

But Ramos says he is actually a homebody when not donning his DJ hat. Hot jockeying is all about music, not the party scene. "Music defines what I do," and doing the club scene is simply an opportunity to play his kind of music and share his favorite sounds with other people.

The living room dining room, with its subdued, solid blues and modern artwork, is where he kicks off his shoes to enjoy moments of peace.

A leather sofa by Japanese designer Umisawa defines the living section of the room. The rectangular wooden table in a light cast is by Filipino craftsmen just like a buffet table beside the cut-metal table in the dining area. It stands on a brown jute rug with its edges traced in black fabric.

A Cuna jar and large accent candles sit on top of the rectangular table. Large colorful jars stand close to the wall.

Set against the picture window with its view of the Makati skyline is a heavy wooden bench that serves as a bookcase. A complete set of heavy, antique Japanese warriors's battle gear, from helmet to armor, stand to one side fashioned on the other

STORY

RAMOS says his books reflect his interests, like home and graphic design.

WORKS by an unknown artist adorn a kitchen wall.

A JAPANESE warrior's outfit from headgear to armor is a guaranteed conversation piece among dinner guests.

FRAMED set of photographs by Jaime Zobel de Ayala.

DJ's Zen retreat

From page F1

side by a assistant.

The books arrayed on the bench, he says, reflect his interests—graphic arts, books and architecture, records, and rubber shoes. The design books are to help him conceptualize the covers for his own albums—nine of them so far for a series called the "Chill-out Project."

Hoarder

Though he says "I can't stand chaos," Ramos readily admits being a "hoarder" like his father. So several pairs from his extensive collection of running shoes, though not as large as his hoard of discs and vinyl albums, are carefully hidden behind a double-door closet. The others are in his private house.

He is also starting a collection of watches. So far, he has a Rolex inherited from his grandfather, Panerai, Audemar Piguet and Bulgari, among others.

A BOOK on creation is a giveaway of Ramos' other major collection, rubber shoes.

A HEAVY wooden table holds a Zen-inspired Cena jar and large candles.

LAID Lianben's almost completely white paintings set off the metallic gray of the living room set by Japanese designer Unknown.

His choice of paintings, though modern, is not the in-your-face kind of work that some contemporary artists favor but features gentle strokes that help achieve the Zen minimalism of his home. A series by Lin Lianben on the wall behind the sofa is almost pristine white, with just the slightest touches—sometimes barely discernible—of color.

Setting off the dark wood of the dining table are two large Zen paintings by Cana in red, black and white. Arrayed against the wall of the corridor leading to the bedrooms are works by Jose Acuna while a Gus Albor piece leads the way to Ramos' bedroom.

STARTING regime is a collection of watches.

From the kitchen is adorned by a set of paintings by an unknown artist while a stylized photograph by Jaime Zobel de Ayala is positioned right next to the door.

Despite the calm air of the living/dining room, music remains integral to Ramos' home. One of the bedrooms not only holds his collection of CDs and vinyl (every month brings new titles), but is also a mini recording studio where he mixes his "Chill-out" discs, editing them in his laptop before sending them to his record label, MC4 Universal.

The recently released ninth album is now available in music stores in the country and a few Asian cities. Ramos says there are plans to sell it in more countries.

But do not expect Ramos to give up his 8-center as coordinator just yet. Despite the packed try "Pillbox 1" ruler in Oud rock market pays for the sneaker, the shoes, the watches" and needless to say the music albums.

MIXES his CDs with his own recording equipment and adds them in a laptop.

A JAPANESE samurai

THOUGH not as large as his CD "treasure," Ramos' shoe collection is almost as impressive.

Beyond the usual home pieces

By Sheila B. Navarro
Contributor

I WAS RECENTLY IN San Francisco for our annual family vacation. Whenever I'm there, aside from shopping at the Union Square area, I love going around the quaint streets of downtown Hayes Valley to discover new boutiques and stores that might have come up during the year, and wonderful old haunts as well.

One store that never ceases to amaze me is Flotsam, a furniture store that supports local artists. Its up-and-coming designer is named Derek Chen. I had heard of him from interior designer friends in the Bay Area, so I just had to go and see for myself.

The products that I saw were, by and large, quite unique and contained an Asian flair. Maybe it could be the fact that I was in Asia when I met Derek Chen.

I wanted to interview these emerging San Francisco talents—a furniture line of innovative modern, a painter and a painter—but it was not easy to set up those meetings because of our schedules. Fortunately, I was able to talk to Chen.

I was happy to have along with me my daughter Mikka, who looked like a professional photographer the day we toured Chen's factory.

MOBAH vase

Sleek yet natural

Born in China and raised in Michigan, Chen is an Electrical Engineering graduate who worked as a management consultant for more than a decade. He then jumped onto the dot-com bandwagon and as with most dot-com businesses in 2001, that phase of his life quickly ended.

Left with a lot of time in his hands, Chen immersed himself in his hobby of designing and creating things.

"Today, almost five years after he put up his studio, Tribeca, his pieces may be found in homes in different cities in the US and other parts of the world.

Lifestyle magazines like Wallpaper, Resolve and In Style in the US have reviewed his home line pieces, plywood vases and waterproof Teardrop resin vases. Both pieces are a product of a monolayered material—specifically, wood and resin. The result is a very sleek yet radical look.

Chen showed me the renovations of the new furniture line that he was preparing for an upcoming New York launch.

His furniture's lightness in appearance defies their actual strength and durability, a testament to his engineering background.

We compared notes on the pains of furniture production and the reality of risking a compromise between your chosen design and the imperatives of business.

"A person has to make his living too, right?" he said. He agreed that the difficult part was trying to make the product stick in your market.

American voice

His early stages in the design field are always daunting and not for the faint of heart.

Chen observed that the Europeans have been very aggressive and productive in the field of modern design. Italian and French brand names are easily mentioned when modern furniture and design are discussed.

Council, an association which Chen founded, aims to bring an American voice to the design field, reminiscent of the early Hillbet Knoll and Herman Miller.

As the name implies, "there is collaboration at play," said Chen. "I have developed many relationships with different designers in Milano design that gives rise to Council. My goal is to produce furniture at a commercial level to be able to compete with the international market."

Along with fellow designers from San Francisco and two other distinct designers from Europe, he put together an integrated collection which was recently viewed at Inva interior trend furniture fairs.

In April the collection debuted in Milan, Italy at the Fiumara Salone del Mobile 2007. It was also shown at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York City.

Council aims to create curated lines of distinctive pieces that fit together for each room of the home.

Long process

I was awed by the long process it took to hand make Chen's products.

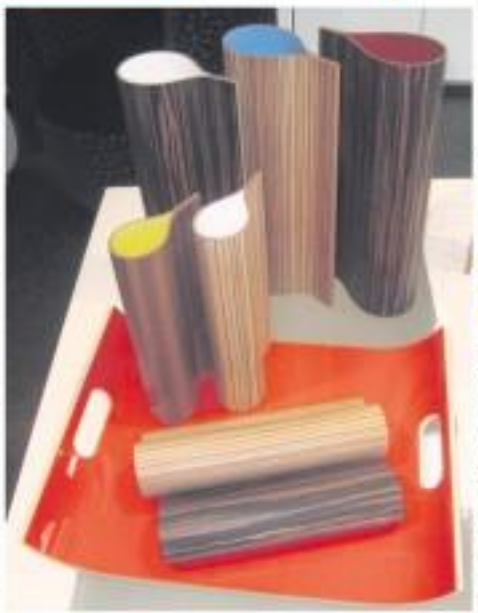
"That's why my items can be very costly. You can produce just a small quantity for a period of time," said Chen.

The Teardrop vase is fully waterproof and is made of recovered plywood in colours, macassar ebony, douglas fir or walnut. Born in the shape of a teardrop, it is sealed, weighted with opaque colored resin and finished with a satin lacquer. The vase is available in three sizes and six wood veneers.

On the other hand, the Bentwood tray is made of high-gloss clear resin over graphic print or woven fabric. It is available in nine colors.

Both the Teardrop vase and the Bentwood tray are now available in different sizes at Beyond Beatles, a lifestyle store located at the Dolce Consolacion Building 122 Aguirre St., Bel Air, Makati City.

The author is co-owner of Beyond Beatles (tel. 4988181) and interiors. Visit www.beyondbeatles.com. Email: bbs.youdbeatles@yahoo.com


HAND-MADE. weaving and curly Derek Chen vases and vases

TEARDROP vase

BENTWOOD trays

THE ARTIST overseeing Vera Casa designer Derek Chen

DESIGN. Chen

PSID pays tribute to Filipino furniture makers in "F3"

THE PHILIPPINE SCHOOL OF Interior Design (PSID) the newest Class of 2007 will unveil its graduation exhibit titled "Family, Filipino, and Fabulous" (F3) on Sept. 29-Oct. 31, at the Pinoy Cookies Pinoy de Rosas on Salcedo Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City.

Mounted in cooperation with the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP), "F3" also celebrates PSID's 20th anniversary with an exhibit showcasing Philippine furniture integrated into modern fully developed and renovated interior spaces.

"We embrace this opportunity for cooperation between CFIP and PSID. We've worked with a lot of PSID's faculty and alumni, and we've always been impressed with their talent and professionalism," says Joy Garcia, CFIP vice president for Chamber Developments. "With this exhibit, we look forward to the students' designs as they promote Filipino furniture. We hope that will inspire students to explore furniture design as well."

"We are excited at the formation of CFIP and PSID with a fresh, thought-inducing interior design exhibit. All 10 booths are carefully planned, researched and structured to promote the ingenuity and creativity of Filipino-designed furniture pieces in fabulous interior settings, and to emphasize the importance of furniture as an indispensable element in creating interiors that work," explains PSID professor Bo Fuentes.

PSID is the country's pioneer institution in interior design education, established in 1987 by Regs Izquierdo Cuaso and Hermenio Conde-Leyva, with the curriculum concepts established by interior designers Edith Oliveros, Arch. Lor Calma and Raimund Arnie Espaldon thereon. Since then, PSID has produced a number of successful practitioners and has been a key player in tapping the local furniture resources for interior design.

PSID offers Basic and Advanced Interior design courses to around 250-420 students, with a pool of 21-32 professors. The Advanced Course is marked by a major exhibit that crowns the thesis or the graduating batch.

SAMPAGUITA. Elegance, grace and sophistication best describe this classy duo. Attention is concentrated on the heavily carved daybed serving as the area's focal point. Eclectic meets modern homage. Designed by Karen Eleazar and Christian Manzanedo.

SALAPO. A modern Filipino couple's sanctuary, featuring a modern interpretation of the caldon and its deliberate juxtaposition with contemporary elements. Designed by Jean Gil, Kaye Llanos, Jose Soriano and Hayde Uy.

LEGEND. A creative paradox mixing uniquely Filipino icons. Featuring featured Parsonian-inspired tables, frosted glass, and a specially designed black-and-red parsons sofa unit, tribal-inspired coffee table. Designed by Karen Eleazar, Tin Sta. Ana and Glaze Vitas.

National bonsai exhibit Oct. 12-21

THE 4TH NATIONAL Bonsai Open Exhibition will hold a series of fun-filled activities Oct. 12-21 at the Ayala Center, Cubao, Quezon City.

The event will include plant and garden fairs at the Araneta Coliseum Parking Area. Bonsai lectures and demonstrations by foreign masters and local artists. Additional workshop and other basic and advanced workshops will be held at the Activity Area at Gateway Mall.

Bonsai, originally developed by the Chinese in 200 AD for medicinal purposes, refers to the miniaturization of trees.

The agreement for the National Bonsai Open was signed by PSEI's Bobby Goplez, president; Mike Morales, vice-president; and Dr. Rene Cruz, director, signing for the Araneta Center Inc. were Rene dela Cruz, chief operating officer, and Ed Salonga, senior vice-president for leasing.

Top creative minds want to get inside your house

Designer labels for your home

BLACK cow-shaped crystal vases arrangelia a row

GLAZED ceramic vase candleholders and cobalt-blue candle holder

OUR HOME, THE LIFESTYLE store that offers great pieces, has selected linen designed by some of the country's top interior and fashion designers.

Shiv Villanueva, Adel Amores, and Ben Lichauco designed furniture and decor pieces for modern spaces, while Fashion designer Inje Laurel adds his couture touch to his bed linen lines.

Villanueva showcases his Tenet Collection for Our Home. He designed "a sectional sofa with relaxed slanted back cushions and an unstudied choice fantasy that you can convert to different looks by fronting up the pieces of the sofa making every angle an attractive one."

He said, "a well-upholstered sofa makes a strong visual statement. It is the center piece of good interior design."

Although her background is in pastoral red, frilling, his restricted into Tenet Interior Blooms for Our Home—antique-print, pastoral curtains and cushions.

She said there was an need to change all the furniture in a room for a fresh, new look. A change in color and accessories can achieve the same effect.

Laurel's designer linens showcase the green aspect of style he learned at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and the Central St. Martin's School in London, and from dressing up some of Manila's most elegant women.

He has six bed linen collections exclusively for Our Home—all inspired by his love of travel and graphic lines. These are Aurelion, The Strip, Emerald, Cobalt, Mirage, and LaCorte, all in 440-piercount cotton 200 thread count and 100 percent cotton fabric.

Lichauco's line two furniture collections for Our Home, Trunk and Footrest. The Trunk collection consists of trunks in sofas with a wide variety wood base and fabric padded cushions in neutral beige, rich gold, and refreshing green. There are three-seater and two-seater sofas with matching coffee tables.

The Footrest Collection is dynamic and versatile, movable furniture with multifunctional designs—a dining table that can be converted into a center table, a daybed that becomes a study desk, etc.

Our Home stores are at 301 Megastrell, Fairview, Southmall, Filinvest, Alabang, Festival Supermall, Alabang, Metropolitan Alabang, Ayala Center Cebu, Ayala Center Davao, Ayala Malls Manila Bay, Ayala Malls Vertis North, Ayala Malls Trinoma, Ayala Malls Feliz, Ayala Malls Marquee, Ayala Malls Circuit, Ayala Malls Legazpi, Ayala Malls Capitol Central, Ayala Malls Cebu Business Park, Ayala Malls Abreeza

ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Ernesto C. Velarde

IN THIS ISSUE
- Love and violence, according to Javier Bardem InHollywood /H1
- Disgruntled show biz newbies rush back home Rushes /G8

Hopeless romantic

By Pachalo Concepcion

PIOLO PASCUAL IS A HOPELESS ROMANTIC —in his own words, "a sucker for love stories."

The brown-eyed sweetie, the biggest male recruit in the ABS-CBN stable, is discussing why his shrinks he has also achieved success as a pop balladeer.

"I can't stay away from ballads," Piolo says. "They're at my table."

A gaggle of entertainment writers surround him as he starts explaining the making of his latest album, "Timeless" (Star Records), for the first time, Piolo has had a hand at writing lyrics and assumes greater responsibility as album co-producer.

Work on "Timeless" took two months, with many hours consumed on recording his vocals. Piolo talks with pride about two songs he wrote, "Thats for Me" and "Why Can't We Be Together"...the former dedicated to Winnie Marquez, a hairdressing TV crew

'Donsol' is 2008 Oscar bet

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE FILM ACADEMY OF THE PHILIPPINES (FAP) has chosen the independent film "Donsol," by Adolf Alix, as Philippine entry in the Best Foreign Language Film category of the 80th Academy Awards set in January next year.

A six-member selection committee chose the fourth Petrom movie over Jeffaney Hiles-Aton's "Pinoy Chef" and Mike Bigbang-Arce and Sherwin Nilsen's "Kung Siapa"...

'Donsol' is 2008 Oscar bet

From page G1

ing to director Joel Ginoro of the selection committee.

"We are hoping that a story on whale sharks would impress the foreign execution viewers," Ginoro told Inquirer Entertainment.

"I never thought it would go this far," said Trinoe Dalumbres, Adolfo Alix, 27, who is now working on Trinoe's and Adolfo's first films—"Tambolero" and "Rainers."

"Donsol," which stars Isa Lorem, is a finalist of the 2008 Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival. If won the New Cinemaya (split award and the Best Actress award for Angel Aquino).

So you want to make a hit movie?

DIGIT FILMMAKERS DREAM OF producing, writing and directing a hit film—a movie that gets critical raves and sets a new record at the box office. Alas, only a precious few achieve that coveted dream, and many more end up with results flops or "little hands," and empty pocks because of their genius.

Why can't hit movies be produced with "guaranteed success"? What makes a hit movie?

A recondited

NR once posed this entire question to veteran Leo Productions head Ali ing Tommy Bautista. While great success is not inherent, she replied, "Up until to this, if I knew the answer, I'd be a billionaire by now!"

Well, we deserved that kind of answer reply. Undaunted, however, we undertook the movie people for tips—and got a mixed bag.

Since film is a mass medium, the biggest hits are made by producers that appeal to the greatest order of the movie audience.

In the Philippines, demographics is, for us at that the country's population is primarily young. As, movies for kid, teen and family viewers have a better chance to make it big at the till.

Major factor

STORY is another major factor. Not only should you aim your movie at the biggest viewing money, you also have to make sure there's something in your story and in principal character viewers can empathize with.

That sounds easy, but it isn't. To get to the point regarding you've got to fully understand what makes your target audience tick—what it wants, what it needs, what it chooses of what its other personal priorities are.

Difficult objective

AS ANY psychologist will tell you, that's a difficult objective to achieve. And, ironically, that dodgy journey begins with knowing yourself first. Because you're the one generating the material that others are supposed to find meaningful, inspiring, entertaining and deeply empathetic.

Well, no wonder few hit films are being made. With heavy requirements like these, only a few can gain success.

Then, there's the question of film type. Will your story turn out to be a drama, comedy, fantasy, action, sci-fi, horror,—or, as quite often happens lately, Pinoy halo-halo?

Search logical

THAT'S because some local producers want to play it safe and give everybody something in their movie to like. That sounds logical, but experience tells us that it can make your movie a big, unfocused mess, so watch it. You can be too "logical" for your own good.

It's really better to make your flaws type clear, so that viewers will know what they're in for. Such is advertising" Rogelio.

Speaking of advertising, you have to face the unpalatable fact that most hit movies are products of saturation promotion, which include hugely pricey TV spots. So, after finding money to make your film, you have to get your hands on even more money to promote it.

Star value

PEOPLE you also have to face the fact that many local hits banks on strong "star value," which is similarly expensive. That is, if you can stay convinced to accept your terms of bankable stars, whose work schedules are all filled up until 2000.

Fortunately, there are the wonderful exceptions. For instance, "Tanging Ina mo" had modest star value, but it made sound. Attribute that to its heartfelt and inspiring story about a functional family.

Battle-tested

WHAT about "Tanging Ina"? The At-At debut film viewer also broke the bank, without costing us arm and a leg. Ironically, however, its unconventional style tried to repeat its phenomenal showing with a follow-up project—that didn't set the box office on fire again.

So, that takes us back to where we started—with close Ading Tonog Soriano's hefty search of banks sound solutions. "If I knew the answers I'd be a billionaire by now!"

Hopeless. . .

From page G1

member the time about someone whose laundry lick would rather keep secret.

The owners must have fun times, but harrowed budget. A witness exhausted studios a valid guess. Does he name story with the letter J?

Wouldyat, "Pido replies. . .

"How about the letter P?

Pido doesn't say crowed.

The hosting members, and the press conclude it's probably Pido Penaflor.

At 38, Pido Penaflor is considered. He have 10-year-old kid, Hugo, from a past relationship, but looks forward to getting married five years from now. His idea of romantic moments is getting good. Just being able to soak in the sun and hold hands with his beloved is enough, he says.

Here's a guy, drop-dead gorgeous and unbilled-married, who can't find a mate because work gets in the way.

As for now, Pido controls himself with composing all his serious about romance through ballads, loads of it, seven more (!).

What, did you do, exactly, as co-producer of your album?

This is the first time in my five years with Alix Records that I had a free hand in choosing the songs and who to work with, like Jonathan Illanda who is my co-producer. He produced two songs ("Walang Kapalit" and "Mow Lamang") that I had previously recorded. I insisted on working with him again, and also for three new songs to be included in the album. I wanted to make him hear songs I made, hoping that providing the melody for the studio I was really look, a point because, In my past albums, the recordings recording time was two hours per song. For this one, there were tracks that I had to go back for three or four hours, to do some tuning. It took me an average of five hours per song. And I would return many times to the hotel to listen to it, now and over. If I found something to fresh also unobtainable, I'd record it again. I invested that much time in the album 'cause I wanted something to brief me to digits to my belongings.

The albums all ballads.

Ballads are fabulous. My vocal range is for love songs and my genre is pop-rock. I cannot do jazz.

How does one ballad stand out from the others?

It has to be ballad emotions, sing helps you know, something so you should feel, what you sing is people would know. It's not just a song—but there's a story to tell.

What's your all-time favorite ballad?

It has to be "Kahlangan Mo" because it's really emotional. For time to feel and listen the song very well to be able to sing it. There's another one, Nancy Magbanua sng Padang Hangjan" by Jun Pelicito, which was my first exposure to sport ballads.

Do you listen to other types of music to suit your different moods?

I listen to everything. I listen to classical music like Beethoven when I'm trying to motivate myself, to get into the mood when I'm writing, also Josh Groban, Bocelli. Once in a while, when I want to relax at night, I play meditation music, New Age and Zen type.

What's your top musical idol?

I've always been a fan of 112 because its music withstands time. My favorite rock ballad is "All I Want Is You." It's really a classic band and Beatles that gained vocal range. He has transcended pop, jazz, music, he's now a social icon, because he's using his influence for global concerns.

Do you see yourself writing along the lines of a U2 song?

If I had more freedom and more talent, of course I would! If I would only have Beatles talent, listen and the way he sings and writes, I'd glad to do that. The fact that I've started writing songs for my album is already opening doors for me. It's something new and I'm gladly taking up the challenge.

What's is more powerful as a medium, film or music?

I think they complement each other, but film has a stronger influence. A song has to be supported by visuals for it to come to life. A song you have becomes different when it's played on film.

What's one book you find powerful?

"Embodo 'Ki" It had a powerful book-positive self-control. It changed my whole life as an artist. I gained confidence when I started writing records. It made me feel I was really part of the business, that I could really be a serious artist, writing songs, movies, I like "Transformers." I've always been a fan of Steven Spielberg. My ultimate favorite pop movie is Wesley Snipes, being a fan of Maxine Ryder I have movies like "Phantom of the Opera," Scary-wise, I love "Brazil." I'm a rather incisive movies.

New twists, more musicians needed

HOW LUCKY CAN PIDO PENAFLOR GET?

"Timeless," his fifth album for Alix Records, is said to have instantly soared platinum because two corporate sponsors had pledged to money for advance orders (with every spending tie-up deals, of course). Pido himself is surprised that his soul-heart have registered increased sales, from the usual 100, to the current 250 a day.

But sure-than financial returns, what is there in this about "Timeless"?

Unlike other singer-songwriters, Pido's vocals, though a bit thin, actually sounds pleasant and in tune. There is however in like way his signature bridges, he veers away with vibrato at the climax of some words.

Review

But the songs' sentiments can be a turn to most cute, what one hears are cursive-reading pledges of love and devotion—not bad, sure that is what romantic tunes are about. There are, however, other ways of saying love but fails.

There's one here, "Kaysa Ito Ako" (written by Richard Poon), that deviates from the rest. It's not outstanding, but at least it has a twist: "Tayo'y isa sa'ting magmahal." Both say same-as-they-do-mean-but-

Pido's attempts at writing lyrics, though well-intentioned, shows a lot of promise. "Three for Me" has vivid images, such as comparing with soldiers and angels depicting the subject's devotion and attitude.

What's some about this album is Pido's increased creative control, even if the collection still includes a few covers, like "Ever Pastor's "Isthil Ever" and Boy Abunda's "Walang Kapalit."

The well-groomed inner emotions and Sam Swoon On set-arrangements here are two grounds for "Timeless" to make a lasting difference. **Pachelo Concepcion**

From Toronto to Batanes

Shortly after making her H'wood debut, Iza Calzado shoots a Pinoy indie flick

TAKING a coffee break with friend Denise Albert, left, and director Yeo Laranas, center

By Rocel Sor Ongo Jr.

ON THE DAY SHE WAS FILING, fitted with a "face cast" by prosthetic makeup expert Joel Jones on the set of "Rest Stop/Gasoline" (The Echo)" in Toronto, Iza Calzado was grinning from ear to ear.

"He asked why I was always smiling," recalls Calzado, now back in Manila. "I told him it was because I couldn't believe I was in Canada, shooting a Hollywood movie."

To think, she plays an abused wife in the US remake of "Sigaw." "I was hoping (but never) emotionally and physically throughout the months since."

That was why she had made "cheerleader" her goal (and coping mechanism): "I simply enjoyed myself."

SCREEN Husband Kevin Durand, says Iza, is "very intense and intelligent actor."

PHOTO by Jean Bradford. The H'wood actor took this snapshot with his left hand, results his.

Kiddie crush

But who wouldn't have a blast, having lil Isiah Jean Bradford as co-star?

"He was my crush when he was a kid in 'King of the Hill.' But I didn't want to look star-struck, as I played it cool."

Although she had stopped herself from asking for an autograph, she snatched a snapshot with Bradford. "He took our photo [with his Iris mini]. He said he was good in taking pictures that way."

Bradford is a total pro, she recounts. "One time, the wind-in mould've screwed for him, but it'll be turned up and did the scene with me. I love the feeling when the actor is in the same place, emotionally, with me. I wish we had more scenes together."

MAKEUP expert Paul Jones, shown here fixing Iza's face cast, noticed that the Pinoy was "always smiling."

Liberating, she explains, because she experienced "the freedom of walking in the streets in relative anonymity ... and fulfilling because it was a dream come true."

Back in Manila, she is packing her bags once again, to shoot Adolf Alix and Dave Poduet's "Baconec." She is excited to say the least. "I saw the trailer of JAlix's previous film 'Endo' and found Isaacs inspiring."

Now screen gay

Cameras start grinding this week of October. Iza, she swears with Tatman's Sen Zhu, star of "Meteor Garden" and formerly of the boy band F4.

As to "The Echo," she did rewards on her co-star, prior to filming.

"I checked out Kim's website and found out that he does a lot of charity work for children ... and that his credit," she exclaims. "I love him already!"

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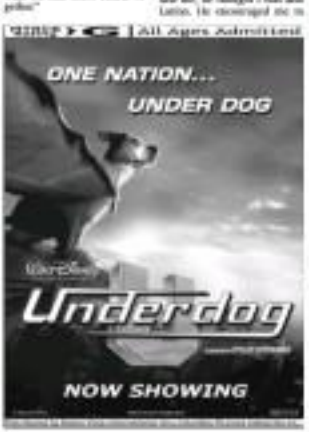

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GALLERIA

1 THE BRAVE ONE • TRX
2 AMO LALAKE SA PAROLA
3 inthelime: SIDLONG
4 I KNOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
5 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
6 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
7 BRATZ
8 ROGUE ASSASSIN
9 UNDERDOG
10 SHOOT 'EM UP

GRADED B by the Cinema Evaluation Board

ERMITA

1 SHOOT 'EM UP
2 UNDERDOG
THE BRAVE ONE
3 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
4 BRATZ
5 THE HOST
6 I KNOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
7 ROGUE ASSASSIN

METRO EAST

1 BRATZ
2 I KNOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
3 SHOOT 'EM UP
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
7 UNDERDOG
8 THE BRAVE ONE

NOVALICHES

1 SHOOT 'EM UP
2 I KNOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
3 UNDERDOG
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN

PIONEER

1 BRATZ
2 SHOOT 'EM UP
3 I KNOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
4 THE HOST

STA. ROSA

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 DAYWATCH
3 DON'T LOOK BACK
4 DISTURBIA

LIPA

1 1408
2 SKINWALKERS
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 UNDERDOG

DASMARINAS

1 NANCY DREW
2 I KNOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 PLANET TERROR

IMUS

1 I KNOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 UNDERDOG

ANGELES

1 DAYWATCH
2 THE LAST LEGION
3 NANCY DREW
4 DISTURBIA

TARLAC

1 THE INVASION
2 A LOVE STORY
3 1408

STARMILLS

1 THE LAST LEGION
2 ROGUE ASSASSIN
3 NANCY DREW

4 DAYWATCH
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 DISTURBIA

BACOLOD

1 SKINWALKERS
2 UNDERDOG
3 THE INVASION
4 THE KING of SCOTLAND
5 HAIRSPRAY
6 1408

ILOILO

1 SKINWALKERS
2 1408
3 DISTURBIA
4 UNDERDOG
5 WAITRESS
6 THE LAST LEGION

MOVIES | SCHEDULES | PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ON THE 1970s, she specializes "tender-with-a-heart-of-gold" roles, says director Eleuterio Perez. "She was spunky."

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

TIES PAT TIAN, WHENEVER she had to attend an awards show here or abroad, actress Gina Pareño never left home without these essentials: a rosary, a tiny angel figure and a small framed photo of late friend Imag Kuala.

In bringing these trinkets, she explains to tiresome Entertainment in a series of interviews that spans over a year, she is "that big" not only here in Manila, but all her experiences—big and small, sad and happy moments...with God and Kuala who guarded every step of the way.

"That's why I relate to my character Aurelia in 'Kahreidor,'" she says in Filipino. "Her loved ones relative left an arrow really left us. They're still here, guiding us, helping us. Isinilang pa nga nila ako sa mata sa Itaas (They made me between God and us)."

By all indications, Pareño has pretty influential mediators in heaven: 2006 was a banner year for her.

She recounts that those lucky charms were in her purse when she won Best Actress in Iskolar, Ikalawa and France (for Joffrey Jovanian's "Balimbo")—and when she virtually swept the local awards derby as Best Actress (also for "Kahreidor," from Pasado, Gawad Tanglaw, Golden Screen Empress and Urian) and Best Supporting Actress (for Joan Arnaiz-Reyes' "Read, Reader" from the Metro Manila Film Festival and Star Philippine Movie Press Club).

Talent manager Ed Instrella, a self-confessed fan from the stars' '60 days, remembers: "She always stood out...She had the same appeal as Bibi got Bardot. It's great to honor that the persons of 'we reached full bloom in '06."

That Pena Dardot, however, was brash and bordering up to the 1950s.

Born Geraldine Acbay, she describes her young self as "gangly. But elevated, with short hair ... a tomboy but more of sensitive" who'd "pass for a boy."

She says her mother Patricia Ocuza, a telephone clerk at the Shaplah Theater on Avenida, fondly she looks "like my German-American father." Recently child, she never met him. "All my young life, my mom was the only one with me," Gina says without rancor.

To help mom make ends meet, she juggled odd jobs at a very tender age. At 13, she worked as tricycle driver on the streets of Intramuros and P. Burgos, Makati. "My last stop was Intramuros. Tricycle fare was only 10 centavos. I was so glad every time I earned P2. Ang pinagyaman noon, 10 centavos (ang Ganyak kalaunan of fabricant 10 centavos)."

Odd jobs

She sold sampaguita and mangos (kind humans found on Intramuros) some, near the Hippodrome, every Sunday, when there was a race at the Sta. Ana tracks.

The street smart has, however, secretly nurtured a dream of becoming a movie actress. "Marvic sha (Tuason-embalmmate's friend) often practice crying in front of the mirror."

Her golden ticket proved to be the ABC 12 TV's show "Dance-O-Rama." Only 14 at the time, Gina was declared the daily, weekly, monthly and finally the year's "Miss Dance-O-Rama."

Years to an Ilea, ex-host and wife of the late "Dance-O-Rama" host Pete Ilea, remembers Pareño as "a flawless beauty with precocious skill."

Gina recalls, "I didn't care about the cash, all I wanted was to act." Part of the prize was a cameo in the show's big screen version, which would sign bill reigning movie queen Susan Roces.

Soon enough, Dr. Jose Rizal of Intramuros Pictures sent her a call slip.

Six-eight months, she toiled in his sales. "Ang aarte-arte ako. That was my training. I was paid P3 per movie. When I left today's

PERSONAL partner Tonton Abaut says Gina is an instinctive actress. "She always knows what to do on the set."

young years about my fi
laugh."

She remembers that d
Heire, finally took notice
in the smorgasbord dram

Later, she was cast to
Guinevere's lady lone in "
"By then, my salary ha
per picture," she says.

Ever the maverick, sh
actor Sampaguita could
luxuries.

Quite fittingly, the pro
gained legitimate and a blue
"I hugs my Sampaloc."

"I had already given fa

des after
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Gina
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ss than
entle journeys

AS THE Pinoy superheroine in "Gamu at Planet Pluo" in 1969, "I already had clone kids by then."

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SHE spends quite weekends in her cool house in the province, where she takes care of orchids

AT THE 2006 Toronto film fest with "Kubrador" director Jeffrey Jetarian

CELEBRAT ING with her mother Patricia (third from left, seated), her grandchildren and her children Michael (first from right, seated) and Raquel (first from right, standing).

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Frustrated newbies from reality search rush back home

A YOUNG SINGER TOLD A SHOW BIZ reporter how a production company official with a good network exploited newbies, all products of a reality search. He was supposedly paid P15,000 for two hit songs, inclusive of royalties. Plus, he said, he and his bunch mates do not have copies of their contracts. Last he heard, his fellow newbies are back to their hometowns. (Inexhaustible)

But not for Jon

A GMA 7 insider notes that Jennylyn Mercado was not pulled out of the planned series "Love Thru," says she turned it down. Another Tagalog source says Jennylyn was never in the picture. "Focus ito ang Dingdig" wasn't for Jen, either, said the source. "It was really meant for Yasmien Kurdi. She's now big project for GMA 7, the source said, is a remake of the Shamo Cinema movie, "My Only Love," which he'll be first ahead.

RUSHES SUNDAY

JENNYLYN Mercado

Hourless heartbreak

This book has a main streak.

When a comedian mother-object and Still on the floor, the 75 best laughed uncontrollably. Her karma was made and just as sweetness. He bumped dancers/dance glam dress and unlocked emcee/dodge.

Oldies, goldies

NEW YORK – When it comes to picking up youthful chicks, the oldies are still the oldies, according to scores his running veteran website the Rolling Stones as the top-earning musicians of the past year. According the thirteen-men website, the Stones earned $300 million from June 2006–06 June this year, thanks largely to their "Bigger Bang" tour, which kicked off in 2005 and has grossed $607 million to date. And although U2 topped the super-stars/brand of Def Jam records Jay-Z came second in the list with total income of $80M, most of the top earners are better known as no-nipping older generations. Madonna, 49, came in third with $72M. U2 band members Bon Jovi took home $65M. Elton John, 60, earned $53M, ahead of Canadian pop singer Celine Dion with $45M. AFP

Top of the tabloids

The top show biz stories in local tabloids this week. (And what we are steered, if we are steered.)

ELSHEKINE Dion

•"Jericho Rosales, nagpa-press na PDM.

•"I won't glorify God kung magbabalak ako."—Annalyn Gotesla

•Gerphi, pinagsigaw si Bingchong Dantes sa mga set nila.

•Kaloy Alcalde na-enjoy makili ang Sonya, Joseph Estrada, resulta Ajuste si Kristen Hermo.

•Kristin Hills, dijar Almonte si Marky Cielo, pinagkakaabalan ng mga bading! (As in?)

•Pagkatapos ng break-up nila si Sam Milby, Anne Curtis nanonood. Da earth, a without a ring?

•Gusto daw si Kris Aquino, nagbabalik dated si Jean Garcia. Effect gusto lang ba?

•TV show ni Abel Flanagan, mga sus! (Something in the air?)

•Kim Chi, Gerald Anderson, nagsagot si Isabel?

•Kim, ill nakasakay ang Audi si Gerald? (Anything tagal?)

•Campaign nina Ogie at Regine si TV comedienne. Okay lang kaya sa kanilang relasyon?

•Regine and Ogie's PDA among Bryan Termulo?

•Bryan Lim John Prats, Shaina Magdayao spare nanonood.

•Sharon Cruz double Kiko, Shaina are sweethearts.

•Shaina says it's Bryan, not John wanting her (Kaya pala.)

•Mike Hotchcroft hate pa, nakaka dalawang anniversary.

•Third party sa breakupang Alice Martin, Ishmael.

•Lagging pera gmail sa breakupang Alice Martin.

•Alice, di na pinagawad ang apelyido ng asawa. (Maliwag ba?)

•Alice, bumalik-Alice?

•Pinaamoka Sharmaine, hagbag-amuk sa pinaniniwalang BF. (Lain pa naman 'yon. Mga bulilit lamat pala?)

•Kamikaze Shaina, spare maging sanayan ang kanilang relasyon, tama ba 'yon.)

•Sensitive na Angelic Kerg gusto niyang manahimik, e di manahimik siya nang manahimik.

•Sensitive, masakitan ng labis sa "Impression." (Ay, bakit?)

•Angel Locsin, aking dol sa pagpilot sa Star?

•Tipsitan nina Judge of Angel Locsin. (Sino si Angel, count si Judge yan, di ba?)

•Angel, nag-anti-aging pagkatapos si KC Concepcion at Dra. (Kakalokah ba 'to?)

•Angel, nanonood ang nanay! (Sigue, Ate Becky!)

•Aney de Leon, indefinite leave sa "Startalk."

•Jerry nagsalubar sa ospitalpay na nanay, nanalaban nanay sa "Startalk." (Wonder Mary Hills, of 6026 Mahogany St. Chino Hills, California, reads: "It's about time someone stuffed Aney de Leon's mouth. Please, we can't stand hearing this woman talk! subject... Hillo Smallness...every single day. We have a California pay network

YASMIEN Kurdi

nanay to collect the in their channel, di ay deserve to keep his endless nagingaling?")

•Willie ay comment at leave of absence ni Jose, nakatanggap din ng salary/guidelines mula sa MTRCB. (An inquiry office, not this secretary's "Pagsusumbalik-alay mahusi si Willie.")

•Nagpaalam ng kanyang ay si "Willyanaya" (Kwentong Dos, nanggagad sa kaalaman.)

•Marilyn Monsanto, "Enough of courtesy interview" (Good-bye!)

•Marilyn, shown ang isang sa kanilang Pops at nonsari. (Good? Sigurado?)

ANGELU de Leon

•Jose, Jalen sa pinkmusing Marilyn Pops. (Kwong hindi yata Ate sa Inglis-lan?)

•Ramon at Marjorie Bea, nagkajoden. (That's what means na Ka.)

•Lolaky si Ramon, Junod Inna Ramon at Bernabel.

•Pia Guanio together, Andalusia ang sobra ng "Show-Me Ground." (Another one?)

•KC Concepcion at Lito Camotan, nag-date sa play ni Rachel Alejandro.

•Oya Bolin, Kristine Hermosa nag-date sa isang 60's film.

•KC not afraid of instigators. (What's her date?)

•Billy Crawford wants to invite KC to his concert. (What's wrong with that? He invited si, too.)

•KC ill alalahin sa concert si Billy. (Lalo kami nating.)

•Mother Lilly, asks no-kay Sweeky.

•Jay Manalo, asks sa angel.

•2 friend ang pinapa-annul ni Sweeky. (Anu-anuse?)

•Also, Sweeky make sa kilabi.

•Sweeky may problema sa asaki

•Sweeky may sabit at pag-lalo? (Pambo yata 'yan.)

Mystery girl

•Sino ang "mystery girl"ni Pinky Pascual? (Don't look at us.)

•Pinky "Ang pogi ko." (Agree Ajalea mind)

•Pinky: "Wala pa akong girlfriend?"

•"Ahwww akong boyfriend?" — Jana Mate

•Marian, mailap sa mga tabloid

•Marian, walang mag-pose at mesh mag. (Bow, bow na mesh.)

•Pinky, nagpa-picture kay Marian Rivera. (Bakit kaya si Marian sa harap?)

•CF ni Mark Herrera, kalayo on sa show biz! (Dito nga raw!)

•Juan Khoosy may Sinobra pa nga Wendy Valdez na matapang pakiki-ar magpa ng kanyak. •Pauleen at Vhong on mga small, mas mura space lang ngio. (There's a ring of truth in this, you know.)

•Ama Sandoval mga maggas bonds.

•Akla Sagisaan, nga ang sandata ng Yesus.

•Pagbabalik ni Ate management. (Closing Bell Aspect)

•Ate Milan to sing Tagalog Christmas at Encanto Ramona night.

•Andrea Pangalan, napalit nang makatanggap ito ang Industria ng Pambansang Aate sa Islam ni Manny. (Who else is against this idea? Raise your hands.)

•Pauleen Luna, Mayor Gerardo Sandoval mga problema sa telepon. (Ayan na.)

WENDY Valdez

ROUNDUP

Stage comeback

ANGELI KRISHNA arrives from Abiya reveals to the Philippine stage as Jessie Fitzgerald's "Dogeaters," directed by Bobby Garcia for Atlanta Productions.

Most plays undergo edits here, but first English language theater critic. She last appeared on stage in the Tagalog version of "The Vagina Monologues."

The play goes on stage at the Cultural Rentals auditorium, RCBC Plaza Makati corner, in

ALEXANDER Ludwig

'Potter'-like

"The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising," which features sequels, actions, spirits and good and evil characters woven into a mindbending story, invites comparisons to the Harry Potter series.

"They do have a lot of similarities and people will draw comparisons," says Alexander Ludwig, 14, of the film that has Britain locks, a young hero who must confront evil and a great deal of magic. "But Will is totally different from Harry Potter in so many ways. As Will, I love to figure out what's going on inside of me."

The film from 20th Century Fox opens soon in local theaters, to be distributed by Pioneer Best.

Auditions

Stages is looking for young male talent between the ages 13 to 19 for a course in recording and television.

Auditions are set at the Stages office, Unit 606 Greenhill Mansion, Pinto St., Legaspi Village, Makati City on Sept. 29 and 30, 2 to 8 p.m. Call 0189111 or 225.

Subic shoot

The TV series "Estrella" recently shot its episode in Subic's sightseeer Monica Hotel. Aiko Melendez and Derek Ramsay and Angelica Panganiban's cameos to name.

Star endorsers

Actress Angel Locsin and Mega Globe Telecoms Inc. Bob Morales are the new endorsers of Magnolia's new line of low-fat yogurt.

The pair will star in TV commercial, new shoots, locations, mostly in the product campaign. "Both embody the healthy lifestyle espoused by the beverages."

ANGELICA Panganiban and Derek Ramsay

KATIE AND ANDERSON ARE GETTING MARRIED...
THEY JUST MET A FEW MINUTES AGO

JASON BIGGS ISLA FISHER
WEDDING DAZE

STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

"Some of this stuff is so out there YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT!"

"This NEW BREED of action thriller HITS THE BULL'S EYE"

"This is a WET DREAM for ACTION JUNKIES"

AT THE CINEMAS

GLOBETTA 1	1 UNDERDOG	2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	3 ROGUE ASSASIN	4 I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED LAST SUMMER
GLOBETTA 6	1 JOSHUA	2 SHOOT 'EM UP	3 THE BRAVE ONE	
	4 BRATZ	5 UNDERDOG	6 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	7 ROGUE ASSASIN
GREENBELT 1	1 SHOOT 'EM UP		2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	
GREENBELT 3	1 SHOOT 'EM UP		2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	
	3 UNDERDOG	4 ROGUE ASSASIN	5 JOSHUA	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY		2 SHOOT 'EM UP	
	3 BRATZ	4 THE BRAVE ONE	5 ROGUE ASSASIN	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	2 SHOOT 'EM UP	3 ROGUE ASSASIN	4 THE LAST LEGION
MARKET! MARKET!	1 ROGUE ASSASIN		2 POST	
	3 UNDERDOG	4 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY		5 SHOOT 'EM UP
TRINOMA	1 1408	2 ROGUE ASSASIN	3 BRATZ / EVAN ALMIGHTY	4 SHOOT 'EM UP
	5 UNDERDOG	6 THE BRAVE ONE	7 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	

AT THE MALLS

glorietta	Magnolia Events Circuit September 23, 2007 at the Glorietta Activity Center
GREENBELT	Jose Wights September 28, 2007 at the Greenbelt 5 Art Piazza
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Teen Dance Competition September 22 & 23, 2007 at the Activity Center
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Elliot Yamin at Americas Idol Live! September 28, 6 pm, Skyridge (Cinema 1)
MARKET! MARKET!	Elliot Yamin at Americas Idol Live! September 23, 2007, 6 PM at the Activity Center
CristaGifts	Repertory Philippines presents LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST September 19 - October 7, 2007
Ayala MUSEUM	FEMME & SINGER: An Exhibition by Mitch & Karen Bautista September 14 to 27, 2007, Ayala Museum For more info, pls. call 757-7117 or 811 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
Tri Nonna	Kingdom Academy The Anghuyatahans at the UP Concert Grounds September 22, 2007, 7 PM at the Trinoma Park

SEPTACULAR

09 24 07

ANG SEPTEMBER 24 SA
PRIMETIME BIDA

SIMULA BUKAS

KAPAMILYA
DEAL NO DEAL
MAS PINAAGA!
New Time Slot
6pm

Mga balitang dito mo lang mabababalitaan.
6:30pm

Goodbye na kaya sa pambansang kalbigan ng kabataan?
7:30pm

VHONG NAVARRO in
MARS RAVELO'S
LASTIKMAN
Parating na ang superhero ng bayan!

May bagong eksena sa love story nina Terrence at Emerald! Si Cassie, kalaban o kaaway?

Ano'ng mangyayari kapag nalaman na ni Ysay na ang kinitala niyang si Andrew ay si Albert pala?

Malalaman na ba nina Gillian at Andrew ang lahat ng ilihim? Abangan ang nalalapit na pagtatapos.

Abangan Mamaya! Sunday's Best Presents KC From Paris to Pinas 10PM

Samahan si KC Concepcion sa City of Lights kanggang sa pagbalik niya sa Pinas!

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2007 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

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Love, violence in the language of Javier Bardem

LOS ANGELES—IT WAS INTRIGUING to hear Javier Bardem speak in one to one press run with him at the Four Seasons hotel in Toronto.

While Javier was showing out words in English, a language he is learning to master, he was speaking from his native tongue and the interviewers were passionate, sometimes surprising, and definitely not genteel.

One of the few actors to win the Best Actor Award twice at the Venice Film Festival, Javier was quoted as saying about his English/Spanish in a different interview: "I'm getting more comfortable, but it will never get to the point as if you are doing it in your own language. When I say 'I love you' or 'I have you' in Spanish, many things come to my mind, aspects of my own life. When I say it to English, I don't have the memories."

He gave a helpe than his English coach in his long-time girlfriend, Cristina Pedoi, a translator to Spain. "We have many of our lessons in bed," said the first Spaniard to earn an Academy Award nomination, for his role as Cuban poet and dissident Reinaldo Arenas in "Before Night Falls." That performance and his riveting turn as a quadriplegic in "The Sea Inside" won him the two awards in Venice.

He may figure prominently in the next awards season for his portrayal of a drug world killer in the Coen brothers' adaptation of Cormac Mc Carthy's book, "No Country for Old Men." Javier's character is so sinister that he is described as having an aura of humor, but that precisely is what causes some nervous stirs in some scenes. The film is one of the best we've seen this year. Joel and Ethan, whose credits include "Fargo" and "O Brother, Where Art Thou," once again come up with an inventive film, which also stars Josh Brolin and Tommy Lee Jones.

Javier reportedly beat Johnny Depp for the role of Florentino Ariza in the much awaited movie version of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "Love in the Time of Cholera," which is scheduled by some as one of the most beautiful love stories ever written.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rishen V. Nebuden

What was it like to be directed by two directors who are brothers?

Reacting with one director is a big task in itself. With two, you can just imagine. But the amazing thing about working with the Coen brothers is that you never feel like you're dealing with two different people. It's like one person is giving instructions. There was never a struggle or contradiction in their statements or wishes. They are very easy and funny. With all this humor that I have to do, and sometimes I have my problems, the brothers were always bringing humor to the set in order to relieve the tension.

Your character is still last year Salieri is funny. How was that haircut arrived at? And what was your reaction when you first saw this haircut?

When I arrived in Santa Fe, I knew more or less the road to take with that character. But there were a lot of unanswered questions. There was not a lot of physical description of the character in the book. So the first question of the Coens was, "How do you want to look?" I said, "I don't know."

Paul (LeBlanc), the hair stylist who is a genius, said, "Come here for a second." He started cutting my hair and in two minutes, he did this whole horror of a haircut. He went in the makeup trailer. The Coens laughed. It has almost fell onto the floor laughing. I said, "What's wrong? I need a mirror." When I saw myself in the mirror, I was shocked. I said, "Okay, now I have 50 percent of the character. I just have to put the other 50 percent." That's how good a professional like Paul can be. He had an image in his mind for my character. He did half of my work.

It was a curse, though, because I had to make up every day with that hair (laughter). I was wondering only two days per week. The rest of the week, I was free, walking with that look. No matter what you do, how much grease you put on that hair, it always stayed the same shape (laughter). The Coens owe me.

Did you ever dream you would be in a Coen brothers movie someday?

They have done deeply American movies. Being a Spanish actor, I thought it was impossible for me to ever work with them. But a miracle happened. They called. I was pinching myself, saying, "I can't believe this! I may work with the Coens." But I wasn't familiar with Cormac Mc Carthy's work. I read the script and I was like: "Oh, my God, that's too wild." I flew to New York to talk to the Coens. I said, "Listen, I don't drive, my English is not that good and I have violence. I don't know if I'm the right guy for this movie (laughter)." They said, "That's why we want you (laughter)." I started to laugh. I said, "You are totally crazy." They answered, "We are the Coens."

HE WON Best Actor twice at the Venice Film Festival

I said to myself, "I can't ruin this opportunity." I knew that behind the violent story, there's a huge statement against violence. If anybody can pull that off, it will be the Coens. But I have to say that I had my problems. I've only done two movies where I kill people. This one, and another called "Perdita Durango." Holding a gun is not something that I just naturally like. But this movie shows how violence creates pain and misery. The more money solves things—it only destroys.

This is a very violent character. How did you cope with such a dark role?

For my own sake, thank God, the Coens created a calm, calm peaceful and funny atmosphere. If they set was filled with tension, then I would have had a hard time because I don't particularly like killing people (laughter). One of the things that shocked me was how American military members so much familiarity with guns. On the set, almost everyone knew about the caliber of the guns, how they work, their names. I was like, "What the hell (laughter)?" Where I come from, we are not obsessed with guns.

The Coens told us that you hinted not to be a very good shooter. Did holding a gun push buttons in you?

I said to Joan because the guy is supposed to be a good shooter. I went to the shooting gallery and ... I was like shooting with one eye closed. The guy running me was like, "What the hell? How you done that?" I said, "No." I guess the reason I did well was I had no tension about wanting to do it well.

What I grab one of those horrible things, I am supposed to feel power but I felt weak. Something's wrong about a man with a gun; it's not natural.

One of this film's themes is retribution. Do you get even when someone does you wrong or do you just forgive?

I'm very good at forgiving. Not forgetting but forgiving. You can't forget because it forget is like putting a nail in the memory that is going to teach

"Training future leaders is a hard task, but Sun makes our job easier by keeping us all connected at 50% less the cost."

Jose Chanlar International Music Music Jaycees President, Louie Bustin

SUN CELLULAR
Better network, better value.

Evil kid flick familiar yet suspenseful

REVIEW

IRENE NORO—A long lineage of evil-child movies — from "The Bad Seed" to "The Exorcist" to "The Omen" — has spawned Svahnn," which is at once familiar and yet weirdly novel. It's real chilling.

The Italian debut from director and co-writer George Ratliff, best known for the documentary "Hell House," is a tantalizing, tense thriller in the same period of settings, which adds to the suspense.

Hedge fund manager Daryl Gale (Sam Rockwell) and his wife, Abby (Kim Basinger), have just brought their newborn daughter home to their high-rise apartment on Manhattan's Upper East Side when strange things begin happening.

The baby won't stop crying and Abby can't sleep, so her increasingly fragile state, she turns reluctantly to pills for comfort. Then she starts feeling paranoid, and Portugo makes it seem as if she's slowly losing her grasp on reality, right before your eyes.

Most of the action takes place inside the apartment, and Ratliff makes good use of its long, dark hallway. There's also creaks that going on upstairs, and the incessant hunting and pounding add to the sense of claustrophobia.

In the middle of all this we meet the couple's 9-year-old son, Joshua (played by the subtly creepy Jacob Regan). A serious, sensitive boy with a talent for the piano and a flair for the dramatic. He always seems to be around when bonds events occur but he never seems directly responsible.

Haunting cinematography

We know better — or at least we know enough to be suspicious.

What makes "Solitary" different besides the haunting cinematography from Benoît Debie with its deep reds and blues, is the way Ratliff and screenwriter David Gilbert have developed their characters. The parents don't just stand by foolishly while their world disintegrates — they react like real people. And Joshua isn't obviously menacing from the start. He just seems undeniably jealous and a little sad.

He's a bit of a misfit with his peers — just how impossibly preppy clothes and intellectual conceived beyond his years. It lends makes you feel sorry for him — for a while, at least.

"Do you ever feel weird about me, your weird son?" Joshua asks one night in his dad's barking into late bed. Real scary supportive, tonight, this scene, played by father would. But Sedewall, who's usually a comic out of character on the edge of reason, gives the role more nuance than you might expect. He offers a hint of relief that sets like before he sees tomorrow's husband and father — look when he sees

VERA Portugo and Jacob Regan in "Solitary"

Cybi Weston is doing and acts at the same time as Noah Lucas is all mother, Daryl, a born-again Christian who wants the baby to be baptized, much to the annoyance of Abby, who's Jewish.

Sporadic support

And Dallas Roberts makes the most of sporadic supporting appearances as Abby's gay brother, Ned, a Broadway producer who supports Joshua's obvious musical talent. It's also the first to recognize that's going on when Joshua intentionally mangles "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" during a school concert.

The ensemble is chilling. But if Joshua's decent frightens you, it'll at least make you think twice about having kids.

AP

Love, violence in the language ...

From page 6

you have to overcome that sensation. Forgiving is important. Like when I forgive you, I forgive the system too, my own business mistakes.

Is there anything good about playing bad?

The only thing good about playing bad is that your mother loves the one we love being bad. You feel better about yourself. (laughter).

You and Josh bonded deeply while making this movie. Why did the face of your child so well?

I am so happy to have the chance to know Josh because aside from being a great actor, he's a great human being. He helped keep me here on the ground. This is my first American movie. Josh's an American actor in an American landscape. I was the only foreigner on the set. Nobody ever made me feel like a stranger but you had a bit detached. There was a moment when I was totally lost, like vacuum and nobody was there to help me. Josh was there to ease me out of there.

LEAST LIKELY FUNNY AMBOUT. Javier Bardem is anything but comic in the Coen brothers' dark drama, "No Country for Old Men."

You did the film adaptation of Spanish author Javier Marías's novel "Your Face Tomorrow" this year. When did you read the novel?

When I was 14 years old— I'm 38 now. I was too young to read that book, but I realized how good a love story it was even though I wasn't familiar yet with what love means. But I was truly passionate about the book.

When I heard that Mike Newell was going to do the movie, and there was a possibility of me playing Florentino Ariza, the main character, I had to be there. I liked the challenge of doing the whole journey of a man from when he was 20 years old to 75 years old, whose goal for 57 years is to win the love of a woman. I haven't seen the finished movie but I know that we recorded Gabriel García Márquez's the movie in a very humble way. We didn't pretend to bring Gavin Hargard into the movie. If we were able to capture a little bit of the book's flavor, that would be enough.

Can you comment on the issue of Spanish talents in the international cinema? Who do you credit for this?

Every Spanish actor and actress is indebted to Antonio Banderas. He was the man who opened the doors for Spanish actors. He paved the way for Spanish actors. We owe him, Penélope [Cruz] and Pedro [Almodóvar].

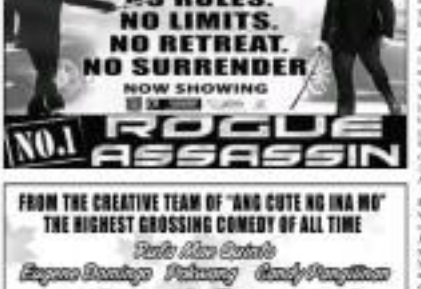
Fifteen years ago, when you broke on with Banderas, Jessica, "if we told you that someday you will be nominated to the Oscars, work with Woody Allen and the Coens and act more in English than Spanish movies, what would have been your reaction?

I would have thought that you were totally nuts.

Now many Spanish actors want to be Javier Bardem.

It's not that they all want to be Javier Bardem because there will be a disaster (laughter). But they realize that people who film in Spain like Woody Allen, Pedro Almodóvar and Javier Bardem go back to their home and say, "Wow, those Spanish actors are great." We have to forgive the feeling of inferiority that we sometimes carry.

If you'd like to comment on Penélope, Javier, Almodóvar, or Banderas, e-mail me at ABI@yahoo.com (and read his blog, "The Agnostic Report," or leave your comments at gantt.com/agnostic).



Sunday LIFESTYLE

Cozy, classy malling

Enjoy the shopping convenience of having the top brands and your favorite restaurants all under one roof at The Podium

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Rony Hendiadi and Jon Rainer Pamplona

THE Lounge on the top roof deck

SEVEN luxurious acres, six levels, 150 tenants

REMINISCENT OF POSH MALLS abroad, The Podium in Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City conserves the growing high-income bracket shoppers that its sister mall, SM Megamall, has left untouched.

Known before as the parking area for SM Megamall customers, the Kaiser-SM joint project, which opened in 2003, aims to give upscale retail shoppers a different experience.

"The Podium serves the A and upper B segments. Included in the customer demographic are the businessmen and owners of the Ortigas business district and the young urban professionals in the vicinity," says Christian Mathay, mall manager.

Surrounded by the Asian Development Bank, Lender and Discovery Suites, and a stone's throw from office employees of JMT and Benguet Centre as well as the residents of El Pueblo, the 7-hectare Podium has six floors of 150 tenants, including kiosks and carts.

The Podium houses apparel shops, fine leather and luggage, specialty shoe shops, accessories and jewelry, sporting goods, specialty shops, recommended food stalls, home furnishings, health and beauty shops, Pinggabet shops, books/music and video, art galleries, entertainment centers, banking and service shops.

The most recent additions include The Body Shoppe apparel for men, women, young adults and children, Industrial's Ice Cream Studio gourmet ice cream to enjoy flavors, and Opera Fine Art Gallery.

According to Mathay, a three-day sale on Sept. 28-30 will offer up to 70-percent discounts on fashion apparel and other items and food.

The Podium's two cinemas (at 100 seats each, with facilities that accommodate clients in disabled wheelchairs. Ample parking is available.

"The mall is open on weekends, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m., and weekdays, 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Restaurants at the exterior ground floor are open until 1:30 a.m.

Enjoy the shopping convenience of having all the top brands and your favorite restaurants all under one roof—The Podium is the way.

THE Podium at 18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City

Continental club

The Podium is the place to go for specialty European cuisine

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Rony Hendiadi

Café Breton

STRAWBERRY Short Crepe

Every now and then, a good cup of coffee and a delicious dessert are all you need to make your day. Add to that a relaxing ambiance and you have the perfect recipe for a memorable afternoon.

Café Breton has been known for its delicious and decadent desserts. Served in elegant coupes, savoury crepes are made of buckwheat flour and filled with meat, sausages, seafood and vegetables.

Dessert crepes, on the other hand, are made of white wheat flour and are perfect with fruits, sweet sauces and topped with cold and whipped cream.

Established in 1998, Café Breton now has nine outlets at The Podium (tel. 6615001), Makati Ave., Ti Manila, Greenbelt, Pasong Tamo, Rockgate, Forbes Molato, Tagaytay and Sta. Rosa.

Aside from crepes, Café Breton's buffet breakfasts are flexible and their Burger patty on a bed of spinach, sautéed mushrooms, cheese and topped with tomato provencal, Lord Parfaits (dessert spoon with cinnamon, vanilla ice cream and classic tiramisu on the side), Breton Mediterranean Burger with side salad, Chicken Eye (chicken breast fillet topped with asparagus and cheese sauce on mixed wheat toast), cold and hot coffees.

HAMBURGERS

PAMELA Lasco (far right), owner and interior designer of Café Breton, with cook supervisors Tommy Mercurio and Aldo Dacuno

Café Mediterranean

PAMELA Estrada, owner of Café Mediterranean

GRECA Pizza

MEDITERRANEAN Pizza

An oasis of good tasting offerings, Café Mediterranean Flavors of the Sea (tel. 6017287) was established in 1998. Aside from the 50-seater Podium outlet, the restaurant has seven other branches in Makati, Rockwell, Bonifacio Global City, Alabang, Mall of Asia, Gateway and Davao.

There's no other way to whisk away an afternoon or evening than with Greek Little Plates (grilled calamares, hummus, fetta olive tapenade, cucumber tzatziki, baba ghanoush, tabbil, meatballs and kabobs/satay). If you're looking for real pizza, the restaurant's chef transforms flour, cheese, tomatoes, ham and sausages into magnificent creations: Mediterranean, Greca, Mediterranean, Rapa and New York.

Soups, salads, stews, steak sandwiches, pastas with fries, smoked salmon, chicken, lamb, pork, fish, lamb kebabs and desserts are also offered.

"What the restaurant offers is Mediterranean cuisine given a contemporary twist. It's not fusion," emphasizes Maria Estrada, owner of Café Mediterranean.

With Café Mediterranean serving cuisines of Mediterranean food at reasonable prices, Estrada expressed confidence in the diners's continued success because "the Filipino palate has become diverse and is ever open to a lot of recommendations."

CASA Armas' Langoustine (Thrashing Style King Crab)

ZARZUELA de Mariscos (Mixed Seafoods)

Casa Armas

A good restaurant is bigger than treating to Casa Armas Tapas Bar 'n' Restaurante (tel. 6878600/6870370). Located at the ground floor, it's a fine dining place where great Spanish cuisine can be had in a good price. The rustic design of the 138-seater restaurant is reminiscent of a Spanish bistro or taberna.

Casa Armas put up the first Casa Armas in 1991 in Makati, Manila. "What he wanted was to create a nice, cozy environment that has quick but not stuffy, so diners could come often," says Lorraine Lim Aguila, who owns and manages the franchise outlets at The Podium, Greenbelt and Jupiter in Makati with her sister Lara Bastinge.

For Armas, cooking is a contemporary Spanish style in a country where most people's knowledge of classic Spanish cuisine begins and ends with paella was almost a daring act.

"Delta Airlines offered his home country's regional dishes as well as updated classics. I was told that he was the one who started the paella, tapas, jaffles, boquerones and tapas crops in their restaurant breakfast," Aguila says.

The restaurant's bestsellers include Imported Atlantic Fishes, Langoustine Estofado, Cocido, Paella Valenciana, Pisotto Negro, Roast Baby Pig, Roast Chicken, Tabla Canadiense Especial, Croquetas de Pollo, Croquetas de Jamon, Angus Beef Steak and Oberon con Chocolate.

For people who love food, says Aguila, Spanish cuisine is all about flavor and the joys of eating. "It is a way of enjoying life by sharing good moments and tastes with friends."

LORRAINE Lim Aguila, owner of Casa Armas franchise at The Podium

ASADO de Pollo En el Jugo (Roast Chicken)

Fuss-less good eats

Podium establishments provide a relaxed ambience for people who simply want to enjoy their food

Text by Bailo V. Bandoc
Photos by Jim Guinto Pumadon

PINOYDON Tuto

SESAME Prawn Salad

BANANA Surprise (macaya bitter-topped with vanilla ice cream and chocolate syrup)

Pinoydon

Right next to Fusion is the Pinoydon (tel. 6211138) that serves Filipino dishes cooked the Japanese way.

With green, simple interiors, the 70-seater restaurant opened its first branch in 2003.

It offers Pinoy rice bowls (in generous servings), salads, noodles/pasta and desserts. It also serves Pinoydon (Filipino-style sushi rolls).

Following the Donburi style of cooking, Pinoydon uses Filipino breakfast favorites to create such innovative dishes as Bistadon, Adobodon (pork and chicken adobo variation), Corndon (corned beef) pictured with potatoes and eggs), Bellydon (Sisig/pork belly), Tocsilog (tocsilog), Longsilog (longganisa) and Tapsilog.

Fusion Smoothie Café

CREAMY Seafood Pasta

FUSION Club Sandwich with fries

KOREAN Braised Beef

You can start your culinary adventure at the fifth level's Singapore-based Fusion Smoothie Café. The leading smoothie chain in Asia has over 12 branches in Hong Kong, Singapore and the Philippines.

Husband and wife Jeremie Ly and Meredith Ilgo, who brought the master franchise for the Philippines, opened the first café in 2005 at Robinsons Galleria on Ortigas Center.

The café offers smoothies with real ice and sugar. It is the first in the country to serve smoothies made entirely from fruits and zero sweetener.

"What makes the body beverage sweet and cold is the blend of blended frozen fruits and distilled aloe vera juice," said Lizette Bautista, vice president for marketing. "So, it's healthy and delicious."

Aside from smoothies in different exciting flavors, the café also offers pastas, sandwiches, salads, pizzas, Asian Jumbowls (rice meals), and the South Beach Diet Delite for health-conscious diners.

Fusion has since become company-owned local branches and a franchise café which opened recently in Tarlac.

Kitsiro

SESAME Tempura

KITSIRO's Chicken Teriyaki

CALIFORNIA Maki

MEAT Lovers Pizza

NYPD

BUFFALO Wings

BAKED Ziti

GO Nuts Donuts' delicious cupcakes

Go Nuts Donuts

Lord Stow's

LORD Stow's Famous egg tarts

Sweet dreams are made of these

From doughnuts to crepe, ice cream to ensaymada, The Podium has almost everything for dessert lovers

Text by Bailo V. Bandoc
Photos by Jim Guinto Pumadon

PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE DIMPLES AND CRUSHES should constitute another food group may find The Podium exactly the place for them.

A quick sugar fix is always available at Go Nuts Donuts.

Kid-even those who have to watch their sugar will still find something to like at the doughnut company. It introduced recently the first-of-its-kind Go Nuts Lite, no-sugar doughnut with the same melt-in-your-mouth quality as regular items. The doughnut has less than a gram of sugar, lower net carbohydrate count and high fiber content.

Go Nuts Donuts has its own mix of espresso, flavored coffees and frozen blends called Mad Shakes. Must-try are the Kooky Kookie that mixes popular doughnut flavors like Go Nuts Donuts' signature Amazing Glaze and the popular Pandan de Leche.

Some four months ago the company introduced another innovation, the Go Nuts Donuts Cupcakes. Made from high-quality ingredients—cake flour, eggs, they use old-fashioned no-shortcut recipes.

Go Nuts Donuts Cupcakes have moist and delicate cake base and have a longer shelf life than any other baked cupcakes in the market. Flavors are Hazelnut Crunch, Butterscotch Toffee and Belgian Dream.

Go Nuts Donuts now has a total of 36 outlets around the country.

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Old reliables serve filling, low-cost meals

Familiar names remain the major crowd drawers at The Podium

Text by Mary Ann I. Balbala
Photos by Rudel Bonoan

You don't have to follow the crowd if you cannot decide where you want to eat at The Podium.

Burgoo

Burgoo (tel. 6876264), south-American diner, has become a favorite with lunchtime customers because of its hefty servings. With a seating capacity of 200, Burgoo is designed to accommodate large groups although a function room or area available for parties and special events.

Highly recommended for first-timers and regular customers alike is the Supreme Sampler (P380), a combination of Buffalo wings, spring rolls, mozzarella sticks and onion rings. For the weight conscious, Burgoo offers Seafood Caesar Supreme (P215), another bestseller, and Linguini with Clams (P165).

SUPREME Sampler

SEAFOOD Caesar Supreme

Subway

Subway is a fast food chain that specializes in sandwiches on the go or at the subway. Set up, The Podium branch has only one small eight-seat table. Simple fare is served as well as packaged.

Lunches right before the morning crowds, or during the leisurely mid-morning or mid-afternoon, are the best time to avail of the promotional discounts and offers. They also sell cookies — their chocolate chip is the most popular.

The best part of it is choosing the ingredients that you want for their customized foot-long sandwiches. Here's a list:

For lunchtime meal, which includes a drink and a cookie between two cookies or a bag of chips, add P40.

HAM and Egg Tray

Delifrance

For those who go for light but filling meals, Delifrance would be a good choice. It is a cozy café located on the ground floor of The Podium mall, one of more than 20 branches nationwide. Delifrance specializes in pastries, croissants and baguettes, perfect for breakfast and light snacks.

Among its bestsellers is the Premier Clubhouse with Chips (P168), consisting of omelette, bacon, honey-cured ham, sliced breast and chips. Another round trip is their Ham and Egg Tray (P218). With scrambled egg, baguette and butter, fruits and choice of orange juice or coffee, it is both healthy and filling for breakfast or brunch.

PREMIER Clubhouse with Chips and Four Seasons

INSIDE Landes

JERK Chicken Breast

PORK Medallion with Wine Sauce

CUBAN Rotini City Caesar salad

ICED Mochiato

Landes

For people with more time on their hands, especially lovers with time to kill, the best place to probably Landes café and deli (tel. 8577138), located at the top floor. It is a good cafe only as cafes, inside a store that sells toys and collectibles.

At first glance, it looks really weird. Every merchandise is on sale for dining area! Sometimes you wonder, what is going on there. A bigger and smaller table and chairs are also there to serve and to entertain.

The concept of the store is quite interesting as it is a combination of the cafe, toy store and collectibles. Not to mention, Tenth Doll Market, created by Tall Badger Clark, Landes serves regular menus, as you can see on its cafe, and delicious coffee concoctions, coffee that comes in many and there is more coffee!

Specialties are the best Mocachino (P140) called Rotini (P140), Fruit Macaroni with Shrimp (P180), Chicken Cordon Bleu (P220), and grilled pork chop (P220), which can be both appetizer and main.

Another must try is the Cobb Mixed Veg Caesar Salad (P140), which is a salad way with a Caesar salad. It consists of assorted greens with special Caesar dressings and topped with a very chopped bacon.

Perfect for weight watchers, it uses a salad dressing instead of mayonnaise, and is dressed in extra virgin olive oil.

Drinks are also a must for Landes. They have to be a drink everywhere. But they sure are with this one, generous with flavors and with dessert on top.

Grace

Rhonadi opened the first Mary Grace outlet in 2001 in Glorietta. She now has 11 kiosks and two cafés. She has added baked items like brownies and lemon squares to her products.

Café Mary Grace also offers pasta, salads and sandwiches.

All Mary Grace baked items are based on Chinadadi's own recipes.

Sebastian Ice Cream

Sebastian (33, of The Podium), a new ice cream brand, offers unique and invigorating flavors to discriminating ice cream lovers.

"We (actually) consider our ice cream as works of art," said Mike Lasalle, one of the owners of the Sebastian Ice Cream chain. "Like the name [Anna] in the gallery. We really carry style and simplicity, to (showcase) our product."

Lasalle, together with college friends Jan Canandang and Tony Kondac, put up their first ice cream station in 2008 in Alabang Town Center. The good response encouraged them to open a branch at The Podium.

"I started as a hobby. I love to make ice creams so I experimented with flavors. Some of them worked, while some didn't. It was really trial and error for us at first," said Canandang, the man behind the "weird" ice cream flavors. He tested different ice cream blends then came up with over 40 distinct flavors.

ENJOY a scoop of Sebastian Ice Cream for P85.

The Market Kitkat Marbero flavor (malt vanilla ice cream garnished with Marbero halves) is one of the bestsellers.

Other exciting flavors include the Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough (vanilla ice cream with slabbed chocolate chip cookie dough and walnuts); Chocolicious Smoky Heat (dark chocolate ice cream with a thick fudge swirl and dark chocolate chunks); Butter Pecan (rich butter ice cream loaded with crunchy butter-roasted pecans); Mango Sakuhai Cachea and the Dulce de Leche con Fresca (sweet dulce de leche ice cream with a bit chewy swirl made of real fruit).

The team is coming out with a new flavor this October, in time for trick-and-treating during Halloween.

Goodies

Savoring Asian flavors

Text by Mary Ann C. Bolante
Photos by Rudel Flores

MAKE A DETOUR FROM THE USUAL THROUGH THE SUSHI OF ASIAN RESTAURANTS AT The Podium. But serve only more and authentic dishes. Most of these restaurants take time in its name.

INSIDE Yaku

DAIKOKU Nikudon

YAKU Platter

Yaku

With Asian fast-food chains popping up like mushrooms, high-end restaurants such as Yaku Japanese Grill (tel. 687-5368) hold a hard time coping. While being located at the corner end of the third floor of The Podium mall may not help draw in the crowd, it does attract more of Yaku's target A-B market.

"Our customers are mostly foreigners, celebrities and politicians. Actually, kami ang tagpuan ng mga artista. Kung pumunta kayo ng mga artista on a date, alindog kumain," Neil Tagalanin, store manager, said half-jokingly. Dim lights, interiors in warm earth tones and mellow tunes create ambiance perfect for those who want to have some peace and quiet.

The bestsellers are Yaku Platter (P725), a selection of ukiro, tuna, pork (left), asparagus and pork strips, quail egg, chicken with onion bells, Spicy Maki-mak (P180), spring rolls wrapped in beef, and Otoko Nimobe (P175), boiled salmon with special Yaku sauce.

Old and new names fill The Podium's Asian food row

TEPPANYAKI Prawns

ROASTED Duck

Gloria Maris

For some restaurateurs always, their best partner may not make potential customers.

"To address this problem, we made sure our branch here in Podium served both more casual fares and other selections. We are an audience-style eatery, formed that we will have more experienced or talented artists [on] hand," said Andrew Lee, Sr., owner of Gloria Maris.

Lee described The Podium branch as a "mini-mall kitchen" as opposed to "fine dining," as in the other locations. And at Maris, Podium (tel. 6345845) specializes in dishes from land, marine, vegetables and fruits from oceans of the tropical and temperate zones (seafood).

"We changed our menus all the time. We take the cue from customers who love the food that we do not have, and then we try to work out an additional dish if time," Lee said.

A must-try is the Sizzling Pinakbet (P380) in which the vegetable is sautéed in a special sauce and then served on a hot cast iron pan to avoid cold spoons. The best-sellers are Pinoy Kare (P1,150), originally a dining masterpiece, and Pineapple Fried Rice (P180), made with three cooking sauces to form a separate and unmistakable flavor.

GLORIA Maris' Mixed Grill

MARGARITA Quesadillas

KAREEN Lee, Maris Podium's restaurant owner

CRUSTASIA's Singaporean Chili Crab

BUTTER Deviled Prawns

Crustasia

For customers feeling a bit adventurous or unsure of what Asian cuisine to go for, visit Crustasia (Asian Crab and Food Home) (tel. 63 CRAB?) on the third floor of The Podium mall. The restaurant offers Thai, Vietnamese, Singaporean and Chinese ways of preparing crabs, lobster, prawns and shrimps.

Crustasia has a Vietnamese consultant, Tao Chefs and a Filipino chef as well. "Mixed ito sa restaurants ang Pinoy, ako na ngayon na they are lots of opportunities for more overseas trained," said Lily Pao Chan, operations director. "We send our branch managers to local around Asia to get a taste of the genuine and to keep tab of what's new in the food market so that we serve only modern and authentic food to the Filipinos."

Bestsellers are the Singaporean Chili Crab and Black Pepper Crab (1 kilo/900g for 1.1 kg and above); Vietnamese Seafood Pasta (P360), seafood rice served on a hotplate; and Butter Deviled Prawns (P225), prawns made sweet and crunchy. For dessert, try the Vietnamese Spices Cake (P90), alternately layered with pandan and yellow-orange, which is quite similar to our native puto-ayam.

RAYMUND Magdaleno, Crustasia owner

INSIDE Crustasia

Kimono Ken

Another Japanese restaurant in Korean food (tel. 6314440), Ken is reminiscent of pricier ultra-luxurious ones in the B.G. district. Its slogan, "Extravagant ingredients, small bites," is evident in the food and the ambiance. "We have to live up to our name and our concept. But we also want affordable Japanese restaurant in that we offer our dishes at reasonable prices. For the quality of our food, we strive to stay," said Rose Ko, part-owner of Kimono Ken, as to name the restaurant with Korea's Lyana Chan and Janice Chan.

"We don't do advertising. We highly depend on word of mouth. Instead of spending on advertising, we'd rather spend it on making good food and satisfying our customers," Chan added.

The owners said they also do not offer something different

MAKIDO Tempura à la Mode

KIMONO Ken's Salmon Maki Sushi

SYMBIOTE Chan, Janice Chan and Rose Ko, owners of Kimono Ken

by putting a twist to some usual offerings like a creamy Chawanmushi, as in the case of Ude Tsukiyaki (P195). Dessert is also a must-try because of its unique flavors and texture.

Bestsellers are Seafood Mixed Tempura (P220), a sampler plate of assorted Spicy Fresh Maguro Salad (P170), Soba sashimi with vegetables in warm dashi soup, seasoning, and Mango Tempura à la Mode (P90), creamy mango tempura topped with ice cream and chocolate syrup, for dessert.

Sweet dreams are made of these

Pumunta 5

Crepes and Cream

KOREAN Split Sundae

Crepes and Cream (Upper Ground Level of The Podium, tel. 634 5758) tries to satisfy any kind of crepe craving. It specializes in aromatic warm and specially concocted sweet and savory crepes.

A bestseller is the Hazelnut Banana Chocolate, a subtle chocolate-spread and mint-vanilla ice cream wrapped in a sweet crepe with sliced bananas. It is topped with roasted almond flakes and whipped cream and drizzled with chocolate sauce.

Also popular is the Chicken Cheesesteak, chicken and pork sausage with a mild lemon taste, cheddar cheese, crunchy lettuce and juicy tomatoes.

Crepes and Cream also offers coolbase, milkshakes and hot and cold beverages.